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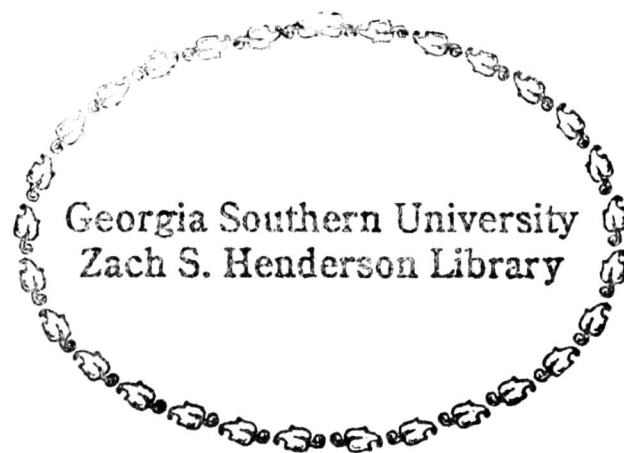
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RULES OF ORDER:
A BIOGRAPHY OF HENRY MARTYN ROBERT,
SOLDIER, ENGINEER, CHURCHMAN, PARLIAMENTARIAN

George Brian Hendricks



Rules of Order:
A Biography of Henry Martyn Robert,
Soldier, Engineer, Churchman, Parliamentarian
by
George Brian Hendricks

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty
of the College of Graduate Studies
At Georgia Southern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts-History

Statesboro, Georgia

May, 1998

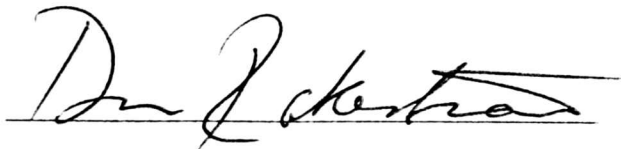
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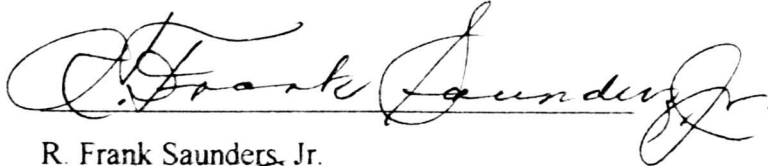
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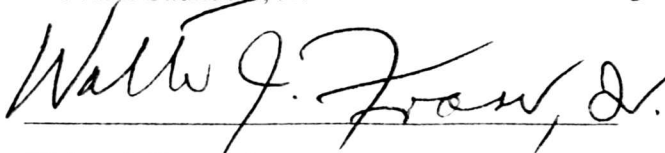
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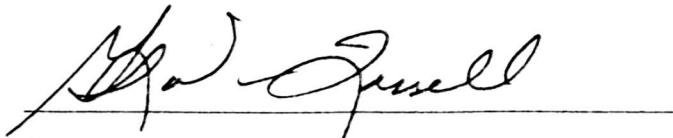
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PREFACE

In 1876 Henry Martyn Robert published *A Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies*. Known by the shorter title, *Robert's Rules of Order*, his manuals helped revolutionize the organizational framework of American life and established Robert as a leading authority on parliamentary procedure. The continued importance of *Robert's Rules of Order* makes Henry Robert one of the most influential Americans of the last 125 years. Yet few Americans are familiar with Robert apart from his parliamentary guides. Most available articles repeat the same basic information and the only full biography available is a short Toastmasters volume that lacks critical notes. Articles also understandably focus on the writing and publication of Robert's parliamentary works. This ignores Robert's life beyond what was, for him, an avocation.¹

Henry Robert was the son of South Carolina slaveholders who left the South in moral opposition to slavery. After graduation from the United States Military Academy and service on the frontier, where he participated in a diplomatic confrontation with

¹ See an original copy of *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies* printed by Burdick and Armitage and published by S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois (1876, 176 pages), in *Papers of Henry Martyn Robert* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Photoduplication Services, 1986, microfilm), reel 7; Ralph C. Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, for Toastmasters International (Los Angeles: Border Publishing Company, 1955).

Great Britain called the Pig War, Robert chose to remain loyal to the Union during the Civil War. Following the war, he enjoyed a long and successful career as a military engineer. He retired from the United States Army in 1901 as chief of engineers. As an engineering consultant after retirement, he helped design the Galveston seawall and causeway, Galveston, Texas. Robert was also a committed Baptist layman who actively supported missions, evangelism and Christian education. A balanced biography is needed which brings together all aspects of Robert's life and provides clear references to source materials.

The most important primary source on Henry Martyn Robert is the collection of his papers in the Library of Congress. These are available on microfilm. Other important primary sources include the Henry Martyn Robert Papers and Lawton Family Papers in the South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina; the Alexander Robert Lawton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and the William Henry Brisbane Papers, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Along with primary and secondary sources, these materials provide an excellent basis for a critical biography. This thesis also draws on new material not previously available, including the journal of William A. Peck, a soldier who served under Robert in the Washington Territory.²

² William A. Peck, *The Pig War and Other Experiences of William Peck, Soldier 1858-1862, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers: The Journal of William A. Peck, Jr.*, edited by C. Brewster Coulter (Senior Editor) and Bert Webber (Special Editor) (Medford, OR: Webb Research Group, 1993).

Many people have helped make this thesis possible. Thanks go to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr. and Professor George A. Rogers who shared materials and gave guidance throughout this project. The other members of the thesis committee, Professors Walter J. Fraser, Jr., and Donald A. Rakestraw, helped guide the project to a conclusion. Ms. Barbara Strickland of the interlibrary loan office, Zach Henderson Library, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, diligently tracked down obscure source materials. I also appreciate the assistance of the personnel of the South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina; the United States Military Academy Archives, West Point, New York; the New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts; and the San Juan Island National Historical Site, San Juan Island, Washington, in completing my research. Finally, I thank my family most of all.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FAMILY LEGACY

In 1685, a group of Swiss Protestants received land grants from the Lords Proprietors of Carolina and entered the colony over the next year as religious refugees. Pasteur Pierre Robert, a Reformed minister, and his wife, Jeanne, immigrated with these refugees. They brought with them their ten-year-old son, Pierre, Junior. The Roberts helped settle Jamestown, St. James Parish, in the Santee River area. Pierre, Senior, became the first pastor of the settlement's French Huguenot church, a mark of some distinction in Carolina history. He held the pastorate of St. James Santee until January 1710 and continued to live in the area up to the time of his death in 1715. After the settlement ceased to exist, about 1720, a large part of the original town site passed to, Jacques, Pasteur Robert's grandson. Jacques later moved away. When he died in 1774, he was buried at Stoney Creek Church, near Yemassee, South Carolina.¹

¹ Annie Elizabeth Miller, *Our Family Circle* (1931; reprint, Hilton Head Island, SC: Lawton and Allied Families Association, 1987), 190-208; Thomas O. Lawton, Jr., "A Tribute to Pasteur Pierre Robert in the 300th Anniversary Year of His Ordination to the Ministry," *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina* 87 (1982): 1-14; Thomas O. Lawton, Jr., "Pasteur Pierre Robert's Swiss Ancestry," *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina* 90 (1985): 68-71. A note hand-written into this copy of *Our Family Circle*, p. 208, says Jacques Robert received a royal grant of 1,050 acres in Craven County in 1735.

After Jacques Robert's death, his widow, Sarah Jaudon Robert, moved to the growing Black Swamp region of St. Peter's Parish, Beaufort District. She brought four grown children with her. In 1785 another son, John Robert, and a third daughter, Sarah Robert Lawton, joined her there. Sarah had married Joseph Lawton, son of Edisto planter William Lawton. John's wife, Elizabeth Dixon Robert, also helped strengthen the Robert pedigree, since she was the granddaughter of Landgrave Thomas Smith, a proprietary governor of Carolina. In time, these families would attain sufficient influence in the parish to have the communities of Robertville and Lawtonville named in their honor.²

John Robert apparently became a Baptist in 1779 and served as a deacon in the Black Swamp Baptist Church. Reverend Alexander Scott, John's brother-in-law, organized the church in 1781. John's son, James Jehu Robert, continued this strong connection to the Baptist denomination and served as a leading deacon of the Black Swamp congregation for many years. In addition to his religious activities, James Jehu Robert also served as a

² This area is in modern Jasper County, South Carolina. Sarah Jaudon Robert's brother Elias Jaudon married Jacques Robert's sister Elizabeth Robert. Jacques and Sarah had seven children: James, Peter, Elizabeth, John, Elias, Sarah, and Judith. Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 194-195, 208-209, 239; W. H. Robert, "The Days of Long Ago," *Baptist Courier* (South Carolina), 24 November (?) 1891. Copy in I and O Baptist Church, Jasper County, [South Carolina.] Black Swamp, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina. (Hereafter, Black Swamp Baptist SCL); Thomas O. Lawton, Jr., undated manuscript. Copy in possession of Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia; Thomas O. Lawton, Jr., "Captain William Lawton: 18th Century Planter of Edisto" (manuscript in Lawton Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina, 1957), 7-8. (Hereafter, Lawton Papers SCL); Ora Croft Paul, "Robertville" (paper read before the Beaufort Historical Society. Copy in the private papers of Thomas O. Lawton, Jr. Photocopy in possession of Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia), 1-6; Grace Fox Perry, "Village of Robertville Has Long, Interesting History" (clipping dated 9 May 1948 in Black Swamp Baptist SCL); Lawrence S. Rowland, Alexander Moore, and George C. Rogers, Jr., *The History of Beaufort County, South Carolina*, Vol. 1, 1514-1867 (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996) 4, 297-298, 301-302, 385-386.

trustee for the Black Swamp Academy, founded to educate local young people. In 1802 James Jehu also strengthened ties to the Lawtons by marrying his first cousin, Charlotte Anne Lawton. James Jehu and Charlotte had seven children together. Three months after Charlotte's death in 1817, James Jehu Robert married Phoebe McKenzie with whom he had twelve more children. Joseph Thomas Robert, the second son and third child of James Jehu and Charlotte Robert, was born on 26 November 1807. On 8 September 1830, Joseph Thomas Robert followed his father's example and married his first cousin, Adeline Elizabeth Lawton, daughter of Alexander James Lawton and Martha Mosse Lawton. Given their family connections, the young couple could expect a bright future as they joined the planter elite.³

St. Peter's Parish was established in February 1746. The parish occupied the western extremity of the Beaufort District, the southernmost tip of South Carolina, between the Savannah and Combahee Rivers in the rich Carolina lowcountry. Barnwell District bordered the parish to the north. The Savannah River formed the western boundary of the parish, while the Coosawhatchie River and Swamp bounded it on the east. The

³ Alexander Scott was the second husband of Elizabeth Robert Grimball, daughter of Jacques and Sarah Jaudon Robert. The children of Jehu and Charlotte Robert were Thirza Evelina, Benjamin (died young), Joseph Thomas, Eliza Jane, Alexander, Sarah, and Benjamin. The children of Jehu and Phoebe Robert were Lawrence James, William Henry, Milton George, Adeline Eusebia, Julianna E., Charlotte H., Alexander John, Francis Wayland, Richard Furman, Jehu Stoney, Benjamin Franklin, and Edward Augustus. Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 209, 259-265; W. H. Robert, "Days of Long Ago"; Paul, "Robertville," 6-10; W. H. Dowling, "The Black Swamp Church," *Baptist Courier* (South Carolina), n.d. Copy in Black Swamp Baptist SCL; Fred Jones, "Report on Church History," *Minutes of the Savannah River Baptist Association, 1895* (n.p. n.d.), 10-11. Copy in Black Swamp Baptist SCL; Plat of land sold for Black Swamp Academy, 4 March 1818, Lawton Papers SCL; Deed of land sold for Black Swamp Academy, 12 February 1820, Lawton Papers SCL; Rowland, *History of Beaufort County*, 287-288, 301-302.

presence of these rivers and their associated tributaries and swamps enabled residents to produce rice and sea island cotton, both major cash crops. The rivers also afforded easier access to the coast, particularly to Savannah, Georgia. The rich swamplands and bottom lands produced short staple cotton and rice. The sandy soil of the pine-covered hills produced cotton in smaller yields, along with food crops, such as corn and sweet potatoes. Swine and cattle thrived in the woods and pastures. The ability to obtain and control the most productive of these lands became an important factor in the social and political development of the parish.⁴

Robertville was located at the edge of Black Swamp, not far from the Savannah River. Its proximity to the river made the town a transit point between Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah and Augusta, Georgia. It also made the town an important center of local economic, social and religious life. The crossroads settlement gained stature in 1812 when the Old Black Swamp Church and federal post office relocated to the town. The Black Swamp Academy was founded in 1818. The academy originally accepted only male students, but when an effort to begin a female academy failed, local girls were admitted into the existing school. Charlotte Verstillie, a teacher from Connecticut, taught

⁴ Rowland, *History of Beaufort County*, 4. Stephanie McCurry covers this region extensively in *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). See especially 21, 26-29, 50-58, 66-72, 93-96, 104, 205-206. This fine work is all the more valuable here for its focus on St. Peter's Parish. To compare McCurry's findings to a general description of the South Carolina lowcountry, see Peter A. Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Low Country, 1670-1920* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989). To compare McCurry's description of the parish to the upcountry, see Lacy K. Ford, Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

at the Black Swamp Academy. Her brother Tristram operated a store in the town. In 1819, Alexander and William Lawton opened the principle store in Robertville, which was taken over by J. B. Jaudon and Company of Savannah in 1833. Charlotte Verstillle described the town in 1821 as having six houses, two stores, a blacksmith's shop, the church, and the academy. The wealthy planters of the community lived in homes scattered about the country, rather than in the village proper. Charlotte noted that Tristram owned one of the few homes in the area with glass windows; wooden shutters were most common. She also remarked that even the best homes tended to have one story only, without cellars. "It is surprising how many comforts these people of wealth will voluntarily deny themselves," she remarked.⁵

Tristram's dwelling sat at the intersection of the roads to Charleston, Savannah, and Augusta. A green lay in front of the house. This green also fronted the church and academy. Charlotte mentioned that there appeared to be thirty white and one hundred African-American Baptists in Robertville, along with some Methodists and a few Presbyterians. She felt religion, however, was not one of the major concerns of local residents. "The inhabitants of this place are almost all connected by intermarriages," she noted, "and I am afraid are very worldly minded, and even the Professors appear to think more of the rise and fall of cotton than of the rise and progress of religion." The social

⁵ Quote from Charlotte Verstillle, Robertville, South Carolina, to Nancy O. Verstillle, n.p., 2 March 1821, copy in Lawton Papers SCL; E. L. Inabinett, "The Lawton Family of Robertville" (paper presented to the Lawton Family Reunion, 8 June 1963), 4-7. Copy in Lawton Papers SCL; Rowland, *History of Beaufort County*, 287-288, 301-302, 309-310. On planter homes and the accumulation of wealth and power, see James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1983), 63-68, 82-87.

and economic well-being of parish residents hinged on the production of staple crops. The ability to control the land best suited to the production of rice and cotton, and the opportunity to own slaves to work that land, represented the most important factors in determining power and status in the community. Intermarriage within the leading families helped solidify control over land and slaves and the opportunities and responsibilities that ownership brought with it.⁶

The planters of St. Peter's Parish were particularly powerful. In a society almost wholly given over to agriculture, planter families coupled control of the best cultivated lands and mercantile interests with a complex system of patronage to dominate local life. By 1824, nine tenths of the tidal swampland in the parish lay in the hands of planters. Planters also held 85 percent of other swampland suitable for cultivation. This gave them an enormous advantage in the production of both rice and cotton. By 1850, planters also held 80eighty percent of the unenclosed land in the parish. To broaden the range of agricultural productivity, planters tended to own all types of land available in the area, from prime riverfront and tidal swampland to the sandy soil of the pine hills. St. Peter's Parish was noted for the remarkable diversity of its agriculture. Control of the land, coupled with extensive systems of intermarriage and patronage, enabled families like the Maners, Tisons, Jaudons, Bosticks, Lawtons, and Roberts to dominate the parish.⁷

⁶ Charlotte Verstillle, Robertville, South Carolina, to Nancy O. Verstillle, n.p., 2 March 1821, copy in Lawton Papers SCL.

⁷ McCurry notes that the remaining tenth of tidal swampland was held in estate. Since planters normally functioned as executors and guardians in the parish, it may be assumed that they held at least some control over a good portion of this tenth as well.

In St. Peter's Parish, 80 percent of all farm operators, planters or yeomen, owned their own land and 75 percent owned at least 1 slave. The richest tenth of the parish possessed 70 percent of the real wealth and the top quarter commanded 90 percent. The 39 great planters who owned at least 500 acres and 100 slaves, such as John S. Maner, Senior, and Benjamin R. Bostick, formed 13 percent of the farm operators, yet controlled half of the improved acreage. They also retained about half of the nearly 9,000 slaves in the parish. Other planters, holding between 150 to just under 500 acres, managed 35 percent of the farms, about 39 percent of the acreage, and averaged 39 slaves each. The economic lower half of the parish held only 5 percent of the real wealth, generally working fewer than 50 acres. This group usually controlled 1 or 2 slaves each, if any. By 1860 many of these farmers could no longer compete economically and had moved away. Access to property meant the power to survive.⁸

McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*, 21, 26-29, 50-58, 66-72, 93-96, 104-110, 121, 205-206; Rowland, *History of Beaufort County*, 298, 306-311.

⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census, Schedule 2, Slave; South Carolina, Charleston Beaufort* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications, 1964), microfilm, microcopy 432, roll 861, p. 57, 165. (Hereafter, *Slave Census 1850*); Helen Craig Carson, and R. Nicholas Olsberg, ed., *Agriculture, Industry, Social Statistics and Mortality Schedules for South Carolina, 1850-1880* (Columbia, SC: Department of Archives and History, 1971), microfilm, roll 1, p. 282-283. (Hereafter, *Agriculture Census 1850*); Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, 63-68, 82-92, 126-127; McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*, 51-58, 70-72, 93-96, 308-310. McCurry includes an excellent appendix, breaking down St. Peter's Parish by race, distribution of wealth, productive capacity, and persistence of residence for 1850-1860. Most pertinent here is Table 3, pp. 308-309, which provides a statistical analysis of the productive capacity of the parish's landholdings, broken down by improved acreage. Note that 1850 provides the best year for comparisons because Joseph Thomas Robert and his family were actually in St. Peter's Parish and identifiable on the census rolls. McCurry notes the difficulty in tracing households. Census takers did not often discriminate between resident owners and hired managers. Finding a specific family in a specific place, and tracing that family's assets and residency over time can be difficult.

The relative position of the Robert family becomes more evident upon examination of select holdings of relatives and neighbors in 1850. Henry Smart held 500 improved acres and 2,500 unimproved acres worth \$30,000. His plantation produced over 1,100 pounds of rice and 60 bales of cotton, in addition to substantial amounts of wood, peas and sweet potatoes. Benjamin R. Bostick held 4,000 improved acres and 1,500 unimproved acres valued at \$5,500. He owned 216 slaves, which enabled him to produce 30,000 pounds of rice and 500 bales of cotton, in addition to respectable amounts of wood, peas, and sweet and white potatoes, and to maintain relatively large numbers of livestock. Bostick's plantation also produced hand manufactures valued at \$300. John S. Maner, Senior's 2,000 improved acres produced 90,000 pounds of rice and 400 bales of cotton, along with 5,000 bushels of sweet potatoes and 800 bushels of white potatoes. The plantation also produced 300 bushels of oats.⁹

With 60 slaves, Alexander J. Lawton worked almost 800 acres to produce 6,000 pounds of rice, 75 bales of cotton and sweet and white potatoes. As indicated in the January 1853 settlement of his estates, James Jehu Robert, father of Joseph Thomas Robert, owned two plantations. He inherited one from his father and bought the other from Major John S. Maner. In 1850 Robert reported that 600 of his 13,000 acres produced 63,000 pounds of rice and 60 bales of cotton, 300 bushels of peas and 2,300 bushels of sweet potatoes. He also produced 100 bushels of oats, 300 gallons of molasses, and unspecified manufactures valued at \$225. Robert's livestock were highly

⁹ Agriculture Census 1850, 282-283; McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*, 204

valued, as well, and he owned 37 slaves. His cousin William J. Lawton worked 1,200 acres of his plantations to produce 2,400 pounds of rice and 60 bales of cotton. He also produced substantial amounts of sweet potatoes and held a large number of livestock. John H. Robert (presumably James Jehu's brother), held 700 improved acres on which he produced 18,000 pounds of rice and 36 bales of cotton.¹⁰

These figures reveal not only the relative size of the landholdings, but their productive capacity as well. Joseph Thomas Robert's relatives and social equals controlled the best land in the parish and could work it with large forces of slaves. His wealth in land and slaves never equaled that of his peers. By 1850, however, he had accumulated landholdings which included 40 improved acres and 150 unimproved acres worth \$600. The Roberts also had 4 horses, 11 head of cattle and 4 milk cows. The farm produced 10 bales of cotton, 300 bushels of corn, 100 bushels of peas and beans, and 500 bushels of sweet potatoes.¹¹

Joseph Thomas Robert also owned 23 slaves in 1850. Nine of these were 10 or younger (5 male and 4 female). He owned a boy aged 16 and 2 girls aged 12 and 16. The slaves included 4 women in their 20s and 30s, and two more in their 40s. One woman was 65; 1 male slave was 20; 2 more male slaves were 40 and 56. The remaining

¹⁰ Note that the figures given by James Jehu Robert apparently reflect only the property on which he resided in 1850, not the total property owned, though this may have been the case. A planter might indicate the produce of acreage also reported in the name of a resident manager. This can skew the information derived from the census. The slave census, on the other hand, should reflect the total number of slaves owned. Agriculture Census 1850, 283, 291-292; Slave Census 1850, 199-200, 209; Will of James Jehu Robert, 1818, Lawton Papers SCL; Statement of executors, estate of James Jehu Robert, 3 January 1853, Lawton Papers SCL.

man was 60. The presence of this comparatively large force of slaves made the Robert farm more productive. Most farms comparable in size to that of Joseph and Adeline's owned less than 2 slaves. Accepting 20 slaves as a qualifier for designation as a small planter, Joseph and Adeline Robert may have remained in the planter class, but they could not be considered among the ranking landowners in the parish. The acreage cultivated placed them among the lower fifth of parish landholders. Yet, the 10 bales of cotton produced compared favorably with a plantation working 200 or more acres and the production of food crops was also better than average. The Robert farm was small but productive.¹²

The size and productivity of Joseph Thomas Robert's farm hardly mattered. The wealth and status of the Robert and Lawton families afforded him the education necessary to join the tenth of the parish belonging to the professional class. Joseph Thomas Robert made his mark as a doctor, minister and educator. Ownership of land and slaves brought status, and farming remained a valuable source of supplemental income, but it never defined his vocation.¹³

Joseph Thomas Robert attended Columbian College (now George Washington University) near Washington, D.C., from 1825 to 1826. He then moved to Brown University, where he finished in 1828 at the top of his class. Both institutions had ties to

¹¹ Agriculture Census 1850, 283.

¹² Slave Census 1850, 57; McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*, 308-309.

¹³ On one-tenth of the parish making up a professional class, see McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*, 52, n.31. On the advantages of professional status in southern society

the Baptist denomination. When Brown established a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa in 1830, Robert was among the 134 alumni admitted. In 1829, he moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where he became a resident graduate at Yale College. He also studied at Yale's Medical College through 1830, but did not graduate. He completed his medical studies at the South Carolina Medical College, Charleston, South Carolina, in 1831 and began a successful practice in the Robertville area.¹⁴

Becoming a doctor did not conclude Joseph Thomas Robert's professional studies. He had grown up in the Baptist faith in Robertville, where he was baptized in 1822. Apparently, Robert had given some consideration to entering the ministry before deciding upon a career in medicine. He had returned to St. Peter's Parish in time to witness the revival movement that swept the lowcountry during the nullification crisis. These revivals seem to have grown largely out of the efforts of the Reverend Daniel Baker, a Presbyterian minister from Liberty County, Georgia. As a result of his

and the benefits of even moderate paternal assistance, see Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, 58, 61-68.

¹⁴ McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*, 52; *The Christian Index* (Georgia), comp., *History of the Baptist Denomination in Georgia* (Athens, GA: P. Harrison and Company, 1881), 448; William Cathcart, ed., *The Baptist Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1881, photocopy from American Baptist Archives Center, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania), 992; Benjamin Brawley, *History of Morehouse College* (1917, reprint, College Park, MD: McGrath Publishing Company, 1970), 22-23; Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 August 1943. In Henry Martyn Robert Papers (unprocessed) 1651/2289, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina (These materials, deposited by Dudley Jones, will be noted as HMR SCL 1651. Materials deposited by Don H. Doyle will be referred to as HMR SCL 9547. All are included in Robert's unprocessed papers.); Kenneth M. Greene, Washington, D.C., to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, 8 December 1988; Matthew Gaglione, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, 5 October 1988; Diane E. Kaplan, New Haven, Connecticut, to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, 10 October 1988.

preaching in the Beaufort District in 1831 and 1832, Baker estimated that up to eight hundred converts were made in the district. Efforts by other individuals and churches added to this number. The revival movement apparently reawakened Robert's desire to enter the ministry and in 1832 the Black Swamp Baptist Church licensed him to preach.¹⁵

To prepare for his new calling in the ministry, Joseph Thomas Robert entered Furman Theological Academy. Richard Furman had led in the formation of the seminary in Edgefield, South Carolina, in 1825-1826 to promote the education of Baptist ministers. Joseph Thomas Robert attended during the school's early days, when sessions were led by Reverend Jesse Hartwell at his home in High Hills, South Carolina. Richard Furman's son, Samuel, assisted him. The two men kept the struggling academy going until December 1834, when both men resigned in exhaustion. The academy remained closed until 1837. Joseph Thomas Robert went home and received ordination at Black Swamp Church, where he served as pastor. He remained there until 1839, when he moved on to the First Baptist Church of Covington, Kentucky.¹⁶

As Joseph Thomas Robert began his career as a minister, he had to care for a growing family. In 1832, Adeline gave birth to a daughter, Adeline Elizabeth, but the child died

¹⁵ McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*, 150-152, 164-166; *Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 448-449; Brawley, *History of Morehouse College*, 22; Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 992.

¹⁶ *Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 448-449; Brawley, *History of Morehouse College*, 22; Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 992; Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 August 1943, HMR SCL 1651; Kathy Ann Grenga, Greenville, South Carolina, to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, 7 October 1988; Alfred Sandlin Reid, *Furman University: Toward a New Identity, 1925-1975* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1976), 5-9. Note Furman Academy produced both Furman University,

early. She was followed by Martha Amanda (Mattie), and in 1835 by Joseph Thomas, Junior (Joe). On 2 May 1837, Adeline gave birth to a second son. The tragic story of English missionary Henry Martyn was circulating in Christian churches at the time and Martyn's story evidently impressed Joseph and Adeline. They named their new son Henry Martyn Robert in his honor. In 1839 James was born. Cordelia Eliza was born sometime later and George was born in 1845. George lived only fourteen months and Cordelia died at the age of twelve. Mattie, Joe, Henry and James all survived to maturity.¹⁷

Joseph Thomas Robert seems to have been an idealist and an intellectual. Having entered the ministry, he threw himself wholly into the pursuit of missions and Christian education. The role of educator became increasingly important to him. To Adeline's dismay, he seemed to have difficulty maintaining what she regarded as an adequate income. A poor manager of his family's finances, he had difficulty providing the standard of living to which he and Adeline had become accustomed. Added stress came

Greenville, South Carolina, and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

¹⁷ Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 259-260; Isabel Hoagland Robert, Owego, New York, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 23 November 1941, HMR SCL 1651. Born in 1781, Henry Martyn finished first in his class at St. John's College, Cambridge. He wanted to be a missionary to India, but financial obligations and a ban on missionaries by the British East India Tea Company barred the way. Martyn resolved the difficulty by becoming a chaplain for the company, which then sent him to India. Arriving in 1806, he earned a reputation for success among the Muslim community and eventually translated the New Testament into Hindi and Parsi. By 1812, Martyn had worked himself into exhaustion and died in Persia en route to Britain. A biography circulated posthumously made him a celebrity. See John Sargent, *A Memoir of Henry Martyn, B.D., Late Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and Chaplain to the Honorable East India Company* (New York: American Tract Society, 18--). Copy in the Rare Book Room, Henderson Library, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia; James McNicoll Ogilvie, *The Apostles to India From the Days of St. Thomas to Modern Times*, Baird Lectures, 1915 (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1915), 339-370.

as they attempted to educate their children, which had been a major reason they had moved north. The move to Covington was motivated partly by an effort to bring a Baptist seminary to the town. Joseph Thomas Robert subsequently accepted a call to the First Baptist Church in Lebanon, Ohio, where he served as pastor from 1842 to 1846.¹⁸

The moves to Covington and Lebanon meant that Joseph Thomas Robert increasingly looked outside the South as the field of his work. The pattern was broken when he returned to pastor the First Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia, in 1847-1849. He moved back to St. Peter's Parish in 1849 or 1850. When the family moved to Portsmouth, Ohio, in 1851, they broke many ties with the South. The boys attended northern colleges and Joseph Thomas Robert pastored churches in Ohio and Iowa. Throughout his career, he also farmed local tracts of land. From 1858 to 1863, he served as professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Burlington University in Burlington, Iowa, and from 1864 to 1867 as professor of ancient languages at Iowa State University, Iowa City, Iowa. In 1861, Joseph Thomas Robert received an honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Denison University, a Baptist college in Granville, Ohio. With this additional honor, he returned to Burlington in 1869 as a professor of theology

¹⁸ *Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 448-449; Brawley, *History of Morehouse College*, 22; Adeline Robert, Hopewell, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, August 1858, Lawton Papers SCL; Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 5 August 1865, in the Alexander Robert Lawton Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. (Hereafter, Lawton Papers UNC); Gary Kirchoff, Lebanon, Ohio, to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, n.d.; Adeline discusses the family's "genteel poverty" in Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 30 September 1865, Lawton Papers UNC, and Joseph Thomas Robert describes the effects of his financial "embarrassments" on his children in Joseph

and was soon chosen to serve as president. Health concerns forced him to leave Burlington again in 1870. This time, he went south. As strong as Joseph Thomas Robert's family and cultural bonds might have been, he did not choose to reside in South Carolina again until Reconstruction. Adeline, perhaps more attached to Robertville than her husband, died in exile in 1866.¹⁹

Joseph Thomas Robert's decision to leave the South was influenced by economic and educational opportunities available elsewhere. It also reflected his growing disaffection with slavery. His ambivalence toward slavery apparently grew out of his religious

Thomas Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 28 July 1868, Lawton Papers UNC.

¹⁹ *Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 448-449; Brawley, *History of Morehouse College*, 22; Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 992; Adeline Robert, Hopewell, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, August 1858, Lawton Papers SCL; Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 20 July 1861, Lawton Papers UNC. (Note Denison University anachronistically referred to as Granville College); Gary Kirchoff, Lebanon, Ohio, to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, n.d.; Joseph Thomas Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, Savannah, Georgia, 13 July 1866, Lawton Papers UNC; Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 August 1943, HMR SCL 1651; *Temple Baptist Church Centennial Celebration Program* (Portsmouth, OH: Temple Baptist Church, 1950), 4; S. H. Mitchell, ed., *Historical Sketches of Iowa Baptists*, with an Introduction by D. P. Smith (Burlington, IA: Burdette Company, 1885, photocopy from the Iowa State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa), 198; *Annewalt's Burlington City Directory*, 1859 (n.p.: Annewalt's, 1859, photocopy in possession of Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia), 38-39; *Annewalt's Burlington City Directory*, 1862 (n.p.: Annewalt's, 1862, photocopy in possession of Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia), 14, 89; *Annewalt's Burlington City Directory*, 1870 (n.p.: Annewalt's, 1870, photocopy in possession of Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia), 38-40, 121; Circular for Burlington University, 1870. In *Papers of Henry Martyn Robert* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Photoduplication Services, 1986, microfilm), reel 1. (Hereafter, HMR Papers); *Catalogue of the State University of Iowa, Iowa City, For the Year 1864-1865* (Davenport, IA: Luse and Griggs, 1865, photocopy from the Iowa State Historical Society, Iowa City, Iowa), 26-27. Note Iowa State University is now the University of Iowa, Iowa City; Earl M. Rogers, Iowa City, Iowa, to Thomas D. Austin, Savannah, Georgia, 29 July 1986. Copy in possession of Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia; Earl M. Rogers, Iowa City, Iowa, to Thomas

convictions and seems to have been influenced by the views of Professor Frances Wayland of Brown University, and Robert's cousin, William Henry Brisbane. The lives of Joseph Thomas Robert and William Henry Brisbane run parallel in several respects. Though not directly related by blood, the two men were related by marriage through the Lawton and Mosse families. Both Robert and Brisbane studied medicine and both entered the clergy. Both sought ways to reduce their involvement with slavery. Wherever one family settled into a place of service, the other seemed to be within traveling distance. They maintained close contact.²⁰

Joseph Thomas Robert seems to have adopted his cousin's views on slavery, though in a much less militant form. Brisbane actually developed his antislavery sentiments when he tried to defend the institution through logic and biblical theology in response to a book written by Professor Wayland. By 1839, he abandoned South Carolina for Ohio and became an ardent abolitionist. When the Roberts followed as far as Covington, Kentucky, they combined concerns for the promotion of education and antislavery. A seminary for western Baptists had been proposed in 1833, but friction between proslavery

D. Austin, Savannah, Georgia, 5 August 1986. Copy in possession of Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia.

²⁰ William Henry Brisbane's mother was Mary Anne Mosse, a daughter of Dr. George Mosse. Mary Anne's sister Jane married Benjamin Themistocles Dion Lawton, son of Joseph Lawton and Sarah Robert Lawton. Anna Lawton Brisbane was their daughter. Mary Anne and Jane's sister Martha Mosse married Alexander James Lawton, Benjamin T. D. Lawton's brother. Alexander James and Martha Mosse Lawton were Adeline Lawton Robert's parents. Joseph Thomas Robert's great-aunt, Sarah Robert Lawton, was William Henry Brisbane's Aunt Jane Mosse Lawton's mother-in-law and Anna Lawton Brisbane's grandmother. So Joseph Thomas Robert and William Henry Brisbane each married a first cousin, were first cousins to each other's wives, and their wives were first cousins. Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 346-350. Wallace Alcorn, Austin, Minnesota, to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University,

and antislavery factions had stalled progress. Covington residents hoped that the presence of a minister who was both a southerner and an opponent of slavery would help bring peace. Joseph Thomas Robert seemed admirably suited to the task. A piece of property was obtained in 1840, but the school did not open until 1845, well after the Roberts had left Covington. The faculty's definite antislavery stance helped doom the seminary, and the property was sold in 1855 with proceeds divided among claimants.²¹

Initially, neither Robert nor Brisbane professed abolitionist sentiments and for a time both maintained their slave property despite qualms of conscience. Upper St. Peter's and Prince William's Parishes, however, were notable as the only areas of the Beaufort District during the period to see serious opposition to slavery based on moral and religious grounds. Some planters began quietly to sell their slaves and move north. By 1860, this group included Joseph Thomas Robert. By that year, he no longer owned slaves; he disposed of them before moving to Ohio. Brisbane's dilemma proved more costly. Initially, he sold his slaves to a brother-in-law named Edward H. Peebles, but

Statesboro, Georgia, 17 February 1989; Coy K. Johnston, *Two Centuries of Lawtonville Baptists, 1775-1975* (n.p.: The State Publishing Company, 1974), 59.

²¹ Wallace Alcorn, Austin, Minnesota, to Professor R. Frank Saunders, Jr., Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, 17 February 1989; Johnston, *Lawtonville Baptists*, 60-63; Notes from the Journal of William Henry Brisbane for 18 and 20 July 1835, William Henry Brisbane Papers, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin (Hereafter, Brisbane Journal plus relevant date); *Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 448-449; Blake McNulty, "William Henry Brisbane: South Carolina Abolitionist," in *The Southern Enigma: Essays on Race, Class, and Folk Culture*, edited by W. J. Fraser, Jr., and Winfred B. Moore, Jr., Papers presented at the Citadel Conference on the South, April 1981, Contributions in American History Series, no. 105 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 120-121; Rowland, *History of Beaufort County*, 387, 415-417; Robert G. Torbert, *A History of the Baptists*, 3d ed., with a Foreword by Kenneth Scott Latourette (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1963), 317-318.

later asked Peebles to free them on moral grounds. When Peebles refused, Brisbane negotiated to buy his slaves back at exorbitant rates and then freed them in Ohio.²²

Joseph Thomas Robert went to no such lengths, but his antislavery bent still generated family tension. Brisbane confessed that his wife Anna did not share his full convictions and that she suffered a life different from the one she had envisioned for their marriage. The same could be said for Adeline Robert, for whom Brisbane expressed like concerns. The antislavery tendencies of Adeline's husband and cousins generated conflict with the Lawtons. Although Adeline did her best to support both husband and family, the split would cause acute pain to the Robert and Lawton families during the Civil War. Still, in surviving correspondence Adeline's complaints regarding her marriage remained more economic than moral.²³

Joseph and Adeline tried to give young Henry and his siblings a normal childhood. Henry's parents were dedicated to Christianity and diligently imparted the tenets of the faith to their children. He was undoubtedly strongly influenced by the evangelical fervor of the Baptist faith. Joseph and Adeline were also proud of their southern heritage and of

²² Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 April 1843, HMR SCL 1651; Note signed by Alexander Robert Lawton, 19 December 1850, Lawton Papers SCL; Mortgage note of Alexander James Lawton and Joseph Thomas Robert with the Bank of South Carolina, 7 June 1850, Lawton Papers SCL; McNulty, "William Henry Brisbane," 121-122; Johnston, *Lawtonville Baptists*, 63-65; Brisbane Journal, 18 July 1835, [illegible] January 1838, 8 October 1839, 24 October 1839, 29 October 1839, 8 November 1839, 23 November 1839, 4 January 1840, 21 August 1841, 3 February 1842, 26 February 1842; Rowland, *History of Beaufort County*, 387, 415-417.

²³ Brisbane Journal, 26 February 1842, 28 July 1845, 17 May 1839, 30 June 1860. On their "genteel poverty," see Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 5 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC, and Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 30 September 1865, Lawton Papers UNC.

the advantages it had given them. Despite their opposition to slavery, they could never quite escape the social and economic advantages they had enjoyed as members of the planter elite of St. Peter's Parish. Still, they had no qualms about criticizing the shortcomings of that society. This meant that Henry grew up in a family rooted in southern society, but not bound by it. He had seen more of America than South Carolina, and knew more of the choices the country offered. He also grew up in a home which valued education and mental discipline. Joseph and Adeline apparently expected their children to emulate their father, to earn respect through and to prepare for careers based on academic accomplishment.

All four Robert children at least partly reflected the interests of their father. All expressed an interest in teaching and all spent at least some time in the profession. Henry fondly recalled that his first teaching experience came as a fourteen-year-old high school student in Alabama, just before the family moved to Ohio. The principal put him in charge of a class of boys his own age. Five years later, he was teaching at the United States Military Academy. James, who studied law, theology, and languages, was on the faculty at Burlington when his father served as president, and Mattie taught as opportunities arose. James also taught at Vassar College and served as president of Cooper Academy in Dayton, Ohio. Both Joe and James studied theology. Henry shared Joe's concern for ministerial work and he always remained supportive of his elder brother. James' relative lack of religious fervor as a youth worried his mother, and his profession of faith in 1862 came as a matter of great comfort to her. Still, James' interest

in theology seems to have been more academic than practical. Later in life, Henry and Joe remained close correspondents, while relations with James became more strained.²⁴

While Joe, James, and Mattie earned academic degrees in preparation for careers in teaching, the family charted a different course for Henry. He followed the example of Adeline's brother, Alexander Robert Lawton, and attended the United States Military Academy. If the life of an officer in the army did not appeal to him, which it apparently did, he could take advantage of a free education in engineering. Initially, the family had hoped to gain an appointment for Joe, but the timing proved too difficult. Since the family made application to the secretary of war in the summer of 1852, an appointment would have been conferred in February 1853, well into Joe's senior year at Denison University. Therefore, efforts shifted to Henry, then in his first year at Denison.²⁵

In making their application for Henry's admission to West Point, the family gained the valuable assistance of Secretary of the Treasury Thomas Corwin, whom Joseph Thomas Robert referred to as a friend. Representative John L. Taylor also supported the application, and went so far as to prevent the appointment from being conferred in the

²⁴ *Annewalt's Burlington City Directory*, 1859, 38-40; *Annewalt's Burlington City Directory*, 1862, 14, 89; *Annewalt's Burlington City Directory*, 1870, 38-40, 121; Circular for Burlington University, 1870, HMR Papers, reel 6; *Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 449-500; Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, (?), 8 May 1862, Lawton Papers UNC; Joseph Thomas Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 28 July 1868, Lawton Papers UNC; Mattie Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 26 November 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, to T. Grennell, Detroit, Michigan, 23 June 1892, HMR Papers, reel 3.

²⁵ Joseph Thomas Robert, Portsmouth, Ohio, to C[harles] M. Conrad, Washington, D.C., 16 July 1852, in the United States Military Academy Archives, West Point, New York (Hereafter, Military Academy Archives); Joseph Thomas Robert, Portsmouth, Ohio, to J[oseph] G. Totten, Washington, D.C., 29 July 1852, Military Academy Archives.

name "Henry M. Roberts." The Honorable Mr. Taylor was perhaps the more eager to help when one of Henry's glowing recommendations pointed out to him the grievous fact that no one had ever been appointed to West Point from Scioto County, Ohio. Young Henry's letters of recommendation emphasized his sterling character and skills in languages and mathematics, prerequisites for survival at the academy. Finally, on 21 February 1853, Taylor wrote Joseph Thomas Robert that his son had received an appointment to the United States Military Academy. Henry turned sixteen on 2 May.²⁶

As Henry prepared to report to West Point in July 1853, his family worked to stabilize matters for Joe, whose health had deteriorated. On doctors' recommendations, the family finally moved to Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1856 to start him in farming. Joseph helped young Joe with the farming and pastored a local church. Their timing was bad. The panic of 1857 sent father and son looking for new opportunities. By August 1858, with Adeline and Mattie in a place named Hopewell, Joseph Thomas Robert accepted the position of professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at Burlington University, Burlington, Iowa.²⁷

²⁶ Portsmouth, Ohio, where the Robert family lived at the time, is where the Scioto River flows into the Ohio. Joseph Thomas Robert, Portsmouth, Ohio, to J[oseph] G. Totten, Washington, D.C., 29 July 1852, Military Academy Archives; J[ohn] L. Taylor, Washington, D.C., to C[hables] M. Conrad, Washington, D.C., 14 February 1853, Military Academy Archives; Charles -ear -acy, Portsmouth, Ohio, to J[ohn] L. Taylor, Washington, D.C., 7 February 1853, with concurring signatures, Military Academy Archives; Letters of Recommendation for Henry Martyn Robert, Military Academy Archives; J[ohn] L. Taylor, Washington, D.C., to Joseph Thomas Robert, Portsmouth, Ohio, 21 February 1853, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry M. Robert and Joseph Thomas Robert, Portsmouth, Ohio, to C[hables] M. Conrad, Washington, D.C., 28 February 1853, Military Academy Archives.

²⁷ Hopewell was located between Ottumwa and Burlington, Iowa. Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 5 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Hopewell, Iowa, to Alexander James

In light of these developments, Adeline wrote a revealing letter to her father to tell him the latest news. While she was obviously trying to be the faithful wife, the strain of family affairs showed through in the plaintive tenor of her letter. Apparently, she was trying to convince not only her father, but also herself, that all would be well. Having described the cramped conditions in Hopewell and efforts to drive off loneliness through music, she mentioned Joseph's new position. She noted, rather dismally, that the position only paid seven hundred dollars and that to accept the post Joseph had turned down a pastorate with a higher salary. She could only hope that the pay at Burlington would increase with time. Still, she rationalized that her health would not stand up as well to a renewed stint in a church and she was sure she could find some way to promote religion and education in Burlington. Besides, she added, a new railroad connecting Hopewell, Burlington, and Ottumwa would make it easier for them to manage their affairs in the three communities. After all, she noted, Burlington offered a chance to obtain fruit, melons and berries.²⁸

She noted the disappointment felt in agricultural market prices. Wheat and rye prices made the crop not worth cutting; apples were a total failure; the berry crop was too small. Adeline became homesick for her father's prosperous gardens and orchards. She acknowledged that Joseph would be much happier and "more useful" teaching and preaching than "dealing with all the sharpers out here." Surely God would bless the

Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, August 1858, Lawton Papers SCL; *Baptist Denomination in Georgia*, 449; Mitchell, *Iowa Baptists*, 498.

²⁸ Adeline Robert, Hopewell, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, August 1858, Lawton Papers SCL.

family if they focused on the "best objects." While professing she would be glad never to move again, she reminded her father that she had long ago set her mind to be obedient to "wander up and down" after her husband while smiling at the pain. After all, she wrote, "A home is a thing that a minister & his family must be content to do without." They must be content with heavenly rewards.²⁹

Along the way, Adeline communicated news regarding Joe and Henry. Joe had obtained a post at a female seminary in Kansas City. He wanted to return to the family, but could not until he had paid off debts incurred in building a house. The house was an improvement necessary to keeping the lot it occupied, but the debt now tied him down. Adeline told her father, "I hope that he [Joe] will be a very pious & useful man." She reported, "Prosperity still seems to attend to Henry," a statement she could not then make regarding his father or brothers. Over the course of time, the family came to expect prosperity from Henry and he would eventually shoulder the burden of the family's welfare. This responsibility would occupy much of his energy later in life. To a degree, at least, he would carry it to his grave. For the time being, his goal was to become a military engineer.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid. Emphasis in original.

³⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

WEST POINT CADET

Henry Martyn Robert's education at the United States Military Academy afforded him a critical career advantage. The Corps of Engineers administered the institute and the best and brightest graduates qualified for service in the corps. Since the philosophy at West Point centered on producing engineers who could also serve as officers, the course of instruction emphasized subjects appropriate to engineering. Deficiency in mathematics remained the leading cause of academic dismissal. The Department of Practical Military Engineering helped the cadets apply classroom theory to actual practice on the drill field and in summer camp. Manpower for the department's projects came from Company A, Engineers. Cadets earned merit points in both conduct and academics. These were combined to produce final class rankings for each cadet. These rankings affected a cadet's entire career.¹

¹ Organized in 1846, Company A, Engineers was the United States Army's only standing engineering company. It consisted of one hundred sappers, miners, and pontoons. James L. Morrison, Jr., *"The Best School in the World": West Point, The Pre-Civil War Years, 1833-1866* (Kent, OH: Kent State University, 1986), 1-4, 87-98, 101, 114-115; George S. Pappas, *To the Point: The United States Military Academy, 1802-1902*, with a Foreword by Edward C. Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 281-282, 431; *Regulations For the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York* (New York: John F. Trow, 1853, photocopy from the United States Military Academy Archives), 20-23;

Top graduates of the academy, such as Henry Robert, could expect placement in the Corps of Engineers. Army engineers built fortifications, explored and mapped western territories, and constructed internal improvements. Occasionally, they participated in combat operations. Since the army remained small in the antebellum period, opportunities for advancement were few. Stagnation and departmental provincialism proved to be a constant obstacle. Members of the Corps of Engineers could count on the envy of other officers. Their duties normally placed them in eastern seaboard cities where they made river and harbor improvements, constructed fortifications, and built buildings, lighthouses, bridges, railroads and canals. Occasionally, their duties took them to remote areas for survey work or construction, though the Corps of Topographical Engineers often performed these jobs instead.²

A West Point education proved critical in obtaining commissions and advancement in an army kept small by tight budget restrictions. It was vital for appointment to the elite Corps of Engineers. Graduating cadets routinely could not obtain outright commissions as second lieutenants. Even top cadets often had to be content with a brevet (temporary) rank and wait for the seniority lists to clear a spot for an actual (permanent) rank. Since seniority depended on date of commission, cadets who received actual rank upon graduation might find they outranked classmates by months or even years on the seniority lists. Additionally, very few officers advanced in rank until the

Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York (n.p.n.p., 1854, photocopy from the United States Military Academy Archives), 16.

² Morrison, *Best School*, 8-10, 15-21; Pappas, *To the Point*, 284.

entire West Point class ahead of them in seniority had advanced. So, engineers educated at West Point could count on control of their corps, but expect slow advancement. Initially, pay scales lagged behind rates commanded by civilian engineers. Over time, civilian pay declined to levels comparable to those received by military engineers. The relative rise in pay encouraged career officers to remain in service. This proved true for Henry Robert, who remained in service until he reached mandatory retirement age in 1901.³

When Robert arrived at West Point for entrance examinations in July 1853, Captain Robert E. Lee served as superintendent. Captain John G. Barnard succeeded Lee in March 1855. In September 1856, Major Richard Delafield replaced Barnard. Delafield remained until 1861. Captain Robert S. Garnett served as commandant of cadets when Robert arrived. He was succeeded by Captain William H. T. Walker, who was followed in turn by Major William J. Hardee. These officers supervised the education of Henry Robert and his classmates and implemented a number of changes experienced by them.⁴

A theme of change and experimentation dominated Robert's educational experience. In 1854, Chief of Engineers Joseph G. Totten addressed deficiencies in the West Point curriculum by placing half of the new cadets in an experimental fifth class. The additional year accommodated instruction in neglected subjects. In 1855, Totten and Lee revised the school's demerit system to ease pressure on new cadets while forcing

³ Morrison, *Best School*, 8-10, 15-21; Pappas, *To the Point*, 284. Morrison notes that in 1860 the annual pay for a second lieutenant was \$1,242.00 and for a colonel the pay was \$2,616.00. *Best School*, 20.

upperclassmen more closely guard their conduct. Totten also tried in 1855 to increase the leave time available to upperclassmen. At the time, cadets only received one summer furlough, which followed their second year. Totten convinced Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to review requests for additional one-month furloughs following the third and fourth years. Three-day passes, issued at the discretion of the superintendent, also became available to cadets in 1855. In 1856, cadets received permission to play chess and to smoke tobacco. Hardee brought an interesting experiment to the academy when he used the corps of cadets to test his new manual of tactics. West Point began formal graduation exercises while Robert attended. The first ceremony was held in 1853, but was not repeated immediately. Graduation ceremonies became permanent in 1857, a mark of distinction for Robert's graduating class. By 1855, graduating cadets also had begun commissioning class photographs.⁵

Henry Robert finished his first year ranked sixth in a class of sixty-one. He worked hard to move forward in rank. His proficiency in mathematics earned him an appointment as an acting assistant instructor at the academy in 1856. Acting instructors normally taught the less proficient students in each subject while professors guided the most advanced cadets. To be named an instructor was an honor that indicated a cadet's mastery of the subject. By graduation in 1857, Robert ranked fourth in a class of thirty-eight. He finished just behind Edward Porter Alexander, the brother-in-law of Alexander

⁴ Morrison, *Best School*, 119-120; Pappas, *To the Point*, 423, 427.

⁵ Morrison, *Best School*, 101, 114-123. A copy of Henry Robert's graduation photograph is in HMR Papers, reel 8.

Robert Lawton, Henry Robert's uncle. The progress of both Henry Robert and Porter Alexander reflected well on Lawton's influence.⁶

Robert's fourth-place finish brought an assignment to the Corps of Engineers and he was brevetted a second lieutenant. He received his full commission as a second lieutenant on 13 December 1858. Robert's performance at West Point also led to opportunities in academics. He was offered a position as a professor of mathematics at the University of Michigan, but he chose to remain with the army and to serve as an assistant professor in natural philosophy and astronomy at West Point. In this capacity, he taught physics, mechanics and astronomy to cadets in their third year. In September 1857, Robert also relieved Second Lieutenant David C. Houston as instructor in practical military engineering.⁷

⁶ The top two graduates in 1857 were John Carver Palfrey and Richard Kidder Meade, Jr. Palfrey resigned from the United States Army after the Civil War. Meade was killed in the Confederate service. Porter Alexander is best remembered as James Longstreet's artillery chief in the First Corps, Army of Northern Virginia. *Official Register* (1854), 12-18; *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York* (n.p.:n.p., 1855, photocopy from the United States Military Academy Archives), 10-11, 17; *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York* (n.p.:n.p., 1856, photocopy from the United States Military Academy Archives), 9-10, 16-19; *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York* (n.p.:n.p., 1857, photocopy from the United States Military Academy Archives), 7-8, 15-18; *1990 Register of Graduates and Former Cadets 1802-1990*, Dwight D. Eisenhower Centennial Edition (n.p.:n.p., n.d., photocopy from the United States Military Archives), 280-281; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., From Its Establishment, in 1802, To 1890, With the Early History of the United States Military Academy*, vol. 2, *Numbers 1001-2000*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891, references to the class of 1857 photocopied *passim* from the United States Military Academy Archives); Edward Porter Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*, edited by Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 4-5, 9.

⁷ Morrison, *Best School*, 89, 94; Biographical Sketches, in HMR Papers, reels 3 and 7; Memorandum of Services of Colonel Henry M. Robert, HMR Papers, reel 7; Joseph G. Totten, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, Orders dated 26

Porter Alexander also remained at the academy for a time and joined the Department of Practical Military Engineering. When Colonel Albert Sydney Johnston led a force west to suppress the Mormon uprising of 1857, however, Alexander recognized a useful opportunity for field service. He obtained orders to lead a detachment of sappers west in support of Johnston's army. He left the academy in April 1858 with sixty-two of the engineering company's one-hundred men. Though Henry Robert was not a full professor, in March 1858 he became the only officer in the Department of Practical Military Engineering still teaching. For six months, he carried the full burden of instruction for senior cadets and commanded the remnant of the company of engineers.⁸

August 1857, HMR Papers, reel 1; Special Order No. 125, 28 August 1857, Signed by Samuel Cooper, Office of the Adjutant General, War Department, Washington, D.C., HMR Papers, reel 1; Special Order No. 138, 22 September 1857, Signed by E[dward] Davis] Townsend, Office of the Adjutant General, War Department, Washington, D.C., HMR Papers, reel 1; Special Order No. 30, 24 February 1858, Signed by John Gibbon, Headquarters, United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, HMR Papers, reel 1; Special Order, 12 October 1857, reproduced in Ralph C. Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, for Toastmasters International (Los Angeles: Border Publishing Company, 1955), 17.

⁸ Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 9; Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n.p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Memorandum of Services of Colonel Henry M. Robert, HMR Papers, reel 7.

CHAPTER THREE

FRONTIER SERVICE

Henry Martyn Robert's connection to the engineering company at West Point soon led to field service in the western territories. Angry over broken promises and continued white encroachment on tribal lands, several Indian tribes in the Washington Territory launched a war in May 1858. Hostilities opened with an assault on a column of troops led by Colonel Edward J. Steptoe. General Newman S. Clarke, commanding the military department that included the territory, quickly put down resistance through a combination of military pressure and diplomacy. Colonel George Wright pressured the tribes by successfully implementing Clarke's operational plans. Meanwhile, Clarke negotiated with the angry chiefs through two Jesuit missionaries, Father Pierre J. De Smet and Father Joseph Joset. Most of the native leaders agreed to terms by the end of September.¹

¹ When hostilities began, Clarke had two thousand men available, which was one seventh of the army. Another large force was with Albert Sydney Johnston in Utah. For information on the war and its conclusion, see J. P. Dunn, Jr., *Massacres of the Mountains: A History of the Indian Wars of the Far West, 1815-1875* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1886; reprint, New York: Capricorn Books, 1969); Robert Ignatius Burns, *The Jesuits and the Indian Wars of the Northwest* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966).

Still, the pride of the United States Army had been stung by the attack on Colonel Steptoe and so the government took the war very seriously. Brigadier General William Selby Harney, who had fought in the Seminole wars and in Mexico, was ordered to the Washington Territory to assume command of the department. Harney arrived in October to find the war almost completely over. The War Department also sent new troops to the territory. These included the remnant of the engineering company at West Point. Command of the detachment had returned to David C. Houston, but Henry Robert was still an officer of the company. On 3 October 1858, Robert left New York with the rest of the command. They crossed Panama by rail and in mid-December arrived at Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, Military Department of Oregon. Though the eight-week trip was uncomfortable for the entire company, it proved to be particularly unfortunate for Henry Robert. He contracted malaria in Panama and was afforded little opportunity to recover. When the engineering company arrived in Washington, it immediately set to work re-paving an existing portage road and reconnoitering the area for a new one. This duty occupied the detachment through the winter.²

² L[ogan] U[niah] Reavis, *The Life and Military Service of General William Selby Harney*, with an Introduction by Cassius M. Clay (Saint Louis: Bryan, Brand and Company, 1878), 280-299; Special Order No. 138, 22 September 1857, Signed by E[dward] D[avis] Townsend, Office of the Adjutant General, War Department, Washington, D.C., HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n.p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Memorandum of Services of Colonel Henry M. Robert, HMR Papers, reel 7; Biographical Sketch in HMR Papers, reel 3; Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 18; Runa Erwin Ware, "Order, Please!" *South Carolina History Illustrated* 1:3 (August 1970): 41; William A. Peck, *The Pig War and Other Experiences of William Peck, Soldier 1858-1862, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers: The Journal of Willam A. Peck, Jr.*, edited by C. Brewster Coulter (Senior Editor) and Bert Webber (Special Editor) (Medford, OR: Webb Research Group, 1993), 15-34. Harney was on his way to Utah when he received his new orders. His brevet rank as a brigadier was changed to actual rank to reflect his new responsibilities. Naturally, malaria periodically troubled Henry Robert for the rest of his life.

Spring brought a new assignment. The hostilities in Washington and Utah Territories encouraged the army to link the two areas by a new road designed to stretch from Fort Dalles on the Columbia River to Salt Lake City. It would also intersect new roads linking Salt Lake City to California and the old trails running east to Fort Laramie. The new roads enabled forces in the western departments to support each other more readily. Captain Henry D. Wallen, commanding officer at Fort Cascades, led the expedition to explore a route for the new road. Brevet Second Lieutenant Joseph Dixon of the Corps of Topographical Engineers verified the survey work. Company A, Engineers went along, commanded by David Houston. Henry Robert also went, listed as a supernumerary officer attached to the company. The expedition left Fort Dalles on 4 June 1859 with 9 officers and 184 men.³

Reports by Wallen, Dixon and Houston noted that the expedition proceeded without serious difficulty and Wallen took care to note the impressive scenery. The most difficult part of the trip was fording the Des Chutes River at a point some eighty yards wide. Lieutenant Houston did not like the point chosen by Captain Wallen for the crossing and looked for a better one without success. On a scouting trip 11 June, Henry Robert became lost and finally made his way back to camp at eleven o'clock in the evening

particularly in times of extreme stress or overwork. Robert received his full commission as a second lieutenant in December 1858. Peck's journal provides a delightful and invaluable resource on the company's experiences in the territory.

³ Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n.p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel J. Documents relative to the wagon road expedition appear in a report by General Harney to the Secretary of War, submitted to the Senate as Senate Executive Document No. 34, 36th Congress, 1st Session. These are contained in *History of the Pacific Northwest* (New Haven, CT: Research Publications, Inc., n.d.), microfilm, reel

without horse, shoes, coat, vest or pants. He was, as Lieutenant Houston observed, "a hell of a looking Lieutenant." The engineers finally assembled a pontoon bridge, but did not adequately weight its middle section. Consequently, the first wagon sent across was whipped into the river and its contents lost. Lieutenant Houston corrected the problem, and no further mishaps occurred. Once over the river, the supplies then had to be unloaded, packed up a steep slope, and reloaded in the wagons before the exhausted expedition could continue.⁴

First Lieutenant Robert Johnston, commanding Company H, First Dragoons, was accountable for the material lost in the river. On 28 June 1859, with the expedition camped by Crooked River, a board of survey convened to determine Johnston's culpability. The acting adjutant, Second Lieutenant Marcus A. Reno, signed the order appointing the three members of the board. Reno had graduated with Robert in 1857. First Lieutenant Nelson B. Sweitzer, Company H, First Infantry, served as president of the board. Henry Robert served as recorder. Assistant Surgeon John F. Randolph was the third member. The tribunal reviewed the circumstances of the loss and catalogued the items in the wagon when it went into the river. The officers concluded that the wagon was not actually in Johnston's charge when lost and recommended all charges of culpability be dropped from his record. Robert retained a copy of the report.⁵

27. All references are to this reel of the microform edition. Here, specifically, Report of Henry D. Wallen.

⁴ Peck, *The Pig War*, 73-78, quote p.73; Report of Henry D. Wallen, *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Report of David C. Houston, *History of the Pacific Northwest*.

⁵ Marcus Reno is best remembered for his role in George A. Custer's disaster at the Little Big Horn in 1876. Cullum, *Biographical Register*; 1990 *Register of Graduates and*

Wallen had stopped at Crooked River to divide his force. He planned to journey on to Salt Lake City with 85 dragoons, 27 infantrymen, and 11 sappers and miners. The remaining troops were placed under the command of First Lieutenant John C. Bonneycastle. Departing 1 July, this party worked the route back to Fort Dalles. It surveyed alternative trails to ensure the best route had been found. Henry Robert and 10 men from the engineering company were detailed to Bonneycastle's group. Robert supervised river crossings and took his turn as officer of the day. When the party reached the Columbia, Robert and his men returned to Fort Cascades to build a bridge and to finish repairing the portage road.⁶

This activity was not necessarily free from danger. Years later, Henry Robert told Sarah Corbin, his future daughter-in-law, about meeting Indians while out map-making and bridging streams. He recounted how he got lost while seeking a site for a bridge across the Columbia. While crossing the river, he and his men lost their horses and shoes. Apparently, they also lost their bearings. The party wandered for days before finally lighting a huge fire that attracted the attention of a rescue party.⁷

While eventful, the road work proved to be a brief assignment. During June 1859, conflicting American and British interests in the San Juan Islands erupted in a stand-off

Former Cadets, 280-281; Report of Henry D. Wallen, *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Special Orders No. 3, Proceedings of a Board of Survey Held at Camp Near Crooked River, 28 June 1859, Signed by Henry Martyn Robert, HMR Papers, reel 1.

⁶ Peck, *The Pig War*, 82-94; Report of Henry D. Wallen, *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Orders for John C. Bonneycastle, 1 July 1859, *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Report of John C. Bonneycastle, *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n.p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1.

known as the Pig War. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 set the boundary between Vancouver Island and the United States down the center of the Strait of Georgia and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The treaty failed to assign ownership of the San Juan Islands in the Juan de Fuca Straits. When the United States made known the existence of these islands, both sides registered conflicting claims. The Americans claimed that the boundary line should pass through Haro Strait, between Vancouver and San Juan Island proper. The British held it should pass through Rosario Strait, east of Orcas, Blakely, Decatur, and Lopez Islands. The conflict centered on access to San Juan Island's Friday Harbor as a naval base.⁸

As the debate went unresolved, citizens of both claimants settled on San Juan. Both the territorial government of Washington and the regional Hudson's Bay Company headquarters on Vancouver tried to exert authority and to collect taxes. By 1854, the Hudson's Bay Company was committed to maintaining its interests through a permanent farming station on San Juan. With a joint boundary commission in the area working to

⁷ Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 November 1941, HMR SCL 1651.

⁸ John W. Long, Jr., "The Origins and Development of the San Juan Island Water Boundary Controversy," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 43:3 (1952): 200-205; James O. McCabe, *The San Juan Water Boundary Question*, Canadian Studies in History and Government Series, ed. Kenneth McKnaught (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), 3-7; Barry M. Gough, "British Policy in the San Juan Boundary Dispute, 1854-1872," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 62:2 (April 1971): 59-60; David Hunter Miller, *San Juan Archipelago: Study of the Joint Occupation of San Juan Island* (Bellows Falls, VT: Wyndham Press, 1943), 12-15. Miller excerpts a great deal of primary material on the controversy. Another excellent source of primary material is *The Northwest Boundary* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1868), a collection of Senate documents microfilmed in *History of the Pacific Northwest*, reel 27. References here will be to the microform version. For background on the Oregon Treaty, see also Howard Jones, and Donald A. Rakestraw, *Prologue to Manifest Destiny: Anglo-American Relations in the 1840s* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1997).

establish ownership, the company would secure British sovereignty by demonstrating possession.⁹

On 15 June 1859, an American citizen on San Juan Island named Lyman A. Cutler killed a pig belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company. The next day, high-ranking officials from the company tried to force Cutler to pay damages. Cutler refused, claiming he had warned the company to keep the pig out of his gardens. A heated argument ensued concerning British sovereignty over the sixteen Americans on the island. Cutler and other area residents then appealed to General William S. Harney for protection. In their appeal, they sought protection from retribution by the company and from raids by local Indians, which they claimed had been rising in frequency and ferocity. Cutler later sent a memorial of the incident to Washington, D.C.¹⁰

Harney was delighted to extend his protection. He could use the incident to firmly establish American control over the island. Harney ordered Captain George E. Pickett to take up a defensive position on the island. Pickett and an initial force landed on 27 July. Harney and Pickett worked diligently to establish an unshakable grip on San Juan. James

⁹ Miller, *San Juan Archipelago*, 19-25, 46-48; McCabe, *Boundary Question*, 11-13; Long, "Boundary Question," 203-211; Gough, "British Policy," 60-62; Lester Burrell Shippee, *Canadian-American Relations, 1849-1874*, with an Introduction by Allan Nevins, Relations of Canada and the United States Series (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1939), 240-244; Keith A. Murray, *The Pig War*, Pacific Northwest Historical Pamphlet, no. 6 (Tacoma: Washington State Historical Society, 1968), 22-29.

¹⁰ Miller, *San Juan Archipelago*, 52-67; Murray, *The Pig War*, 32-36; Memorial to General William S. Harney, 11 July 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Winfield Scott, New York, New York, 19 July 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Samuel Cooper, Washington, D.C., 7 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Memorial of Lyman Cutler, 7 September 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*.

Douglas, company governor on Vancouver, responded in kind, urging the commanders of four British warships in the area to land marines and drive out the Americans. The British naval officers and the joint boundary commission tried to mollify both sides.¹¹

Throughout the incident, the conduct of Harney and Douglas proved embarrassing to their respective governments. Despite warnings from the War Department against rash action, Harney maintained an aggressive stance. Disturbed by Harney's stubborn manner, President James Buchanan finally dispatched Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, the commanding general of the United States Army, to restore order. Until Scott arrived, however, Harney exercised a free hand. To reinforce his hold on San Juan, Harney ordered Lieutenant Colonel Silas Casey from Fort Steilacoom with additional troops. Casey eventually commanded 461 men and eight 32-pound guns from the army steamer, *Massachusetts*. He placed his men atop a hill which commanded the harbor. This elevated position protected the garrison from naval gunfire, but left Casey's poorly supplied men exposed to the weather. The position was still vulnerable to assault. Casey needed an engineer on hand to construct adequate facilities and fortifications.¹²

¹¹ Miller, *San Juan Archipelago*, 63-95; Long, "Boundary Controversy," 211-213; Alfred Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to George Pickett, Fort Bellingham, Washington Territory, 18 July 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Winfield Scott, New York, New York, 19 July 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, to Samuel Cooper, Washington, D.C., 7 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Proclamation of James Douglas, 2 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*. Pickett is best known for his role in the Confederate disaster at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on 3 July 1863.

¹² Miller, *San Juan Archipelago*, 96-102, 106-123; Shippee, *Canadian-American Relations*, 245-246; Gough, "British Policy," 62-65; Walter N. Sage, *Sir James Douglas and British Columbia*, University of Toronto Studies in History and Economics, vol. 6, no. 1 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1930), 266-278; W. R. Drinkard, Washington, D.C., to William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 3 September 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*, W. R. Drinkard, Washington,

On 16 August, Harney's acting assistant adjutant, Captain Alfred Pleasonton, ordered Henry Robert to take his ten-man engineering detachment to San Juan to build Casey's fortifications and camp. Robert was impressed by the importance of the assignment. Not only did the detachment have a clear mission to perform, it also had a duty to defend the honor of the Corps of Engineers. Robert wanted his men to keep this in mind. "It is the only time in the history of our army," he wrote, "that Engineer Soldiers have had the charge of a work of the kind & the reputation of the Company and Corps is at stake." He depended on their assistance and Robert trusted that the detachment would do its duty.¹³

Robert asked the men to remember matters of military protocol. He reminded them to salute officers and to stand at attention when being addressed by officers. Robert reinforced the point of saluting. Soldiers *had* to salute officers except when working and not in charge of the party. Robert also expressed a concern for efficiency in carrying out the company's mission. He warned the men that he would assign them tasks based on ability and need, not rank. He hoped they would work in harmony "so as to make a

D.C., to William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 16 September 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to John B. Floyd, Washington, D.C., 10 October 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Silas Casey, Fort Steilacoom, Washington Territory, 18 July 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Alfred Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Silas Casey, San Juan Island, 8 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Silas Casey, San Juan Island, to Alfred Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 12 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Silas Casey, San Juan Island, to Alfred Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 14 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Silas Casey, San Juan Island, to Alfred Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 16 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Winfield Scott, New York, New York, 30 August 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*.

¹³ Orders No. 2 to Company, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 18 August 1859, in HMR Papers, reel 1. Spelling and punctuation in original.

model to those who may be jealous of their peculiar position (in our army)." Robert urged the men to do everything in their power to promote a positive image of the Corps of Engineers.¹⁴

Robert's orders to his company reveal his concerns. His men had been doing strenuous work and would see more of it on San Juan. Yet, the Corps of Engineers had a reputation for light duty. The line troops knew the history of the company as well as Robert. They would recall that the engineer troops had spent almost their entire existence as a company at West Point. The company truly had never been in such service before and critical eyes would appraise its conduct. If discipline lapsed or tempers flared, the reputation of the entire corps would suffer. If the troops failed to construct the fortifications quickly and properly, critics could hold this against them. The matter was complicated in that the manpower for the construction would come from line troops under the command of the engineering detachment. This would place non-commissioned officers of the line companies under the command of engineering privates. The engineers had to maintain discipline, yet avoid provoking trouble. Robert's emphasis on harmony, efficiency and duty reveals his character. He exhibited these traits and he expected men under his command to practice them as well.

On 19 August the engineering detachment left for San Juan Island. The men reached the island on 23 August to find the flags of the two nations flying only sixty yards apart. Ships of both sides anchored beside one another in Friday Harbor. Robert immediately

¹⁴ Ibid. Spelling and punctuation in original.

put his men to work preparing a redoubt, placing the guns, and entrenching the existing camp. At the same time, he supervised a survey of the southern part of the island and the construction of a road. Robert also laid out a larger military reserve for the occupation force and secured the camp's water supply. Colonel Casey originally detailed one hundred men to work under Robert's direction. Problems immediately arose over Robert's refusal to provide a steady whiskey ration for the workers and the right of engineer privates to command non-commissioned officers of the line. Bad weather, a brush fire, easy access to liquor, and the presence of two hundred Indian prostitutes eroded morale. After two mutinies, Robert was forced to use prisoners as workers. Within the engineering detachment, Robert experienced disciplinary problems with Corporal Mark Supplee and a Sergeant McEnaney. Both men drank too much and tended to insult their commanding officers. McEnaney was finally court-martialled, fined and temporarily reduced to the rank of private first class. Robert also had to break up a duel between two officers on 14 November.¹⁵

Robert still expressed pleasure at the progress made by his troops. Under his direction, the soldiers built an earthen redoubt. This was open at the end leading to the camp and generally shaped like a lunette. Breastworks added to the defenses, especially at the open end of the redoubt. These breastworks surrounded the camp. Two 32-

¹⁵ McEnaney is mentioned frequently both in Robert's papers and in Peck, but neither source gives his first name. Peck, *The Pig War*, 95-143; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Winfield Scott, New York, New York, 30 August 1859 in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n. p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Corrections to Thompson's History of U. S. Engineer Troops, HMR Papers, reel 4.

pounders from the *Massachusetts* also covered the open end of the earthworks. The works measured 350 feet on the west side, 100 feet on the southeast and 150 feet on the northeast. The parapet was 7 feet above the interior and the exterior ranged from 25 to 40 feet high. A ditch around the front measured 3 to 5 feet across. The works contained five gun platforms. Work was proceeding on the defenses and camp when General Winfield Scott arrived and ordered an immediate halt to the work on 7 November.¹⁶

Scott arranged a peaceful joint occupation of the island and the reduction of American forces present there. The United States maintained its camp on the southern end of the island and the British established a similar camp on the northern end. Scott also worked to move Harney to St. Louis to command the new Department of the West. He hoped to do this quietly, but when Harney contravened Scott's orders in an attempt to maintain George Pickett in command on San Juan, Scott had the War Department forcibly reassign the recalcitrant general in June 1860. The joint occupation arranged by Scott quieted the issue until after the Civil War. In 1872, as a result of the Treaty of Washington of 1871, Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany awarded the islands to the United States.¹⁷

¹⁶ Peck, *The Pig War*, 95-144; William S. Harney, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, to Winfield Scott, New York, New York, 30 August 1859 in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n. p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Corrections to Thompson's History of U. S. Engineer Troops, HMR Papers, reel 4; [Dale E. Floyd], *Comparative Analysis, American Camp Fortifications, San Juan Island National Historical Park*, prepared for the National Park Service, Columbia Cascades System Office, by CEHP Incorporated (Washington, D.C.: CEHP Incorporated, 1996), 4-10; *Robert's Redoubt Stands Test of Time* (flyer prepared for San Juan Island National Historical Park, Washington, October 1997).

¹⁷ Miller, *San Juan Archipelago*, 111-141; Winfield Scott's Project of a Temporary Settlement, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Winfield Scott, False Dungeness

Scott's arrangement also sent Robert's engineering detachment back to the mainland. The company left San Juan on 1 December 1859 and arrived at Fort Vancouver on the nineteenth. The men finally reached Fort Cascades on 6 January 1860. There the detachment rejoined David Houston's command. The reunification of the company coincided with a change in command. When Houston left to go back east, First Lieutenant Thomas Lincoln Casey, who arrived with an additional twelve men from West Point, relieved him. This brought the strength of the company to thirty-two.¹⁸

In early February, Lieutenants Casey and Robert received new orders. Since Fort Vancouver was situated on the Columbia River, enemy warships on the river could close its primary access route. The army decided to give the fort a line of communications and supply connected to Fort Steilacoom, on Puget Sound near Tacoma. Casey was ordered to cut a wagon road from Lewis River, near Fort Vancouver, to Cowlitz Landing via Toutle Lake. Since a road had been built from Cowlitz Landing to Fort Steilacoom in

Harbor, Washington Territory, to James Douglas, Victoria, Vancouver Island, 5 November 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Winfield Scott, St. Helen's, Oregon, to George E. Pickett, Fort Bellingham, Washington Territory, 10 April 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Winfield Scott, n.p., to [John B. Floyd], Washington, D.C., n.d., in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; Samuel Cooper, Washington, D.C., to William S. Harney, n.p., 8 June 1859, in *History of the Pacific Northwest*; John S. D. Eisenhower, *Agent of Destiny: The Life and Times of General Winfield Scott* (New York: The Free Press, 1997), 338-342. Scott had dealt leniently with an insubordinate Harney during the Mexican War. He refused to accept such behavior now. Eisenhower, *Agent of Destiny*, 235-236, 340. Despite the obscure role played by Henry Robert in the Pig War, he is still the only participant with a marker placed on San Juan Island in his honor. Mike Vouri, Friday Harbor, Washington, to G. Brian Hendricks, Martinez, Georgia, 28 September 1997.

¹⁸ Peck, *The Pig War*, 144-155; Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n.p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Corrections to Thompson's History of U. S. Engineer Troops, HMR Papers, reel 4; Extract of Special Order No. 134, Signed by Alfred Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 24 December 1859, HMR Papers, reel 1; Extract of Special Order No. 5, Signed by H. C. Hodges, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 5 January 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1. Lieutenant Casey was the son of Colonel Casey.

1857, this extension would provide Fort Vancouver with land access to Puget Sound. Three expeditions had already failed to complete the road. While Casey cut the road, Robert could finish the bridge he had begun before the Pig War. The two lieutenants split their company and went to work.¹⁹

By April, Robert felt he had accrued enough field service. He had been on constant duty and had never sufficiently recovered from his bout with malaria. He also concluded that he had been placed in a professional backwater. He had no desire to remain on the frontier building bridges and roads. On 3 April 1860, Robert sent a formal request to Colonel R. De Russy, the departmental chief of engineers, to be relieved from duty. Robert recounted his service from his graduation from West Point to his return to Fort Cascades. He trusted De Russy would see he had not received adequate opportunity to acquaint himself with the primary duties of an officer of engineers.²⁰

Henry Robert interpreted the primary duty of a military engineer to be the construction of permanent fortifications. At the military academy, Robert had been so busy he "could not get off to even see a Fortification" and when he came west he left even his books behind. Once on duty in the Washington Territory, he had been afforded no opportunity to examine the process. After nearly three years of service, he found

¹⁹ Peck, *The Pig War*, 155-163; Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n. p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Corrections to Thompson's History of U. S. Engineer Troops, HMR Papers, reel 4; Copy of Orders to First Lieutenant Thomas L. Casey, Signed by Alfred Pleasonton, 4 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803-1863* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1959), 358.

himself ignorant of fortifications. Robert discounted the field works prepared on San Juan Island. He had trained to be an engineer, but as far as his service to date was concerned, he "might as well have been in the Infantry as the Engineers." Having waited patiently for relief, he concluded that his only hope lay in a formal petition. Otherwise, he would "probably have here but a repetition of the last eighteen months work which in my circumstances now will be time wasted."²¹

It was a strong letter. As he waited for a response, Robert continued to work on the bridge. The discipline of his men continued to try him. On 7 February 1860, he rescinded an order barring enlisted men from offering opinions to officers. "It is proper and advisable," he wrote, "that every man should exercise his mind wherever his hands are employed & if he thinks that he could suggest some improvement it is not the desire of the com[mandin]g officer to suppress such suggestions provided it is made in a proper manner." Robert believed every person had a natural right and responsibility to express his or her opinion, even soldiers. They did not, however, have a right to create disorder and prevent the completion of assigned tasks. Rules of discipline existed to protect both individual expression and the needs of the group. A complaint filed in March by some of the men concerning laundry service failed to gain a positive response because it was not submitted through proper channels.²²

²⁰ Henry Martyn Robert, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, to R. De Russy, Commanding, Corps of Engineers, Department of Oregon, n. p., 2 April 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1.

²¹ Ibid. Spelling and punctuation in original.

²² Orders to Company, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, 7 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1. Spelling, punctuation and emphasis in original; Peck, *The Pig War*, 161.

Despite his efforts, Robert's men continued to test their limits. He again had to remind the men to salute officers. Apparently, this was a chronic breach of discipline. Robert also tightened restrictions designed to keep soldiers out of local Indian villages. He had wished for a more lenient policy, but the abuse of local Indians by the men in Company H, Fourth Infantry led to stricter control over everyone's permission to leave camp. To his men's dismay, when a number of the engineer company were caught off camp after tattoo without proper passes, the lieutenant insisted on allowing them to be arrested by an infantry patrol. Robert did give the men Washington's birthday off, 22 February 1860, and reports from the detachment under Thomas Casey led most of his men to conclude that they still had the better duty. Robert's insistence on military protocol and discipline, however, coupled with his demand that they wrap up work on the bridge despite bad weather, led to disaffection among the men. Despite this trouble, Robert succeeded in finishing both the road work and the bridge by 21 June 1860.²³

Meanwhile, Robert continued to experience trouble with his nemesis, McEnaney. The two had an argument during the trip in from San Juan Island, with McEnaney becoming verbally abusive. Robert preferred charges against the former sergeant, but Lieutenant Casey persuaded him to drop them; McEnaney was made an acting lance sergeant by the end of December 1859. The two men berated each other loudly in yet another argument on 3 February 1860. Four days later, Robert had McEnaney arrested

²³ Orders to Company, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, 7 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Orders No. 4, Issued by Henry D. Wallen, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, 8 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Orders to Company, n.p., 21 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Orders to Company, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, 23 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Peck, *The Pig War*, 156-170.

for being drunk on duty, neglect of duty and being absent without leave. Robert also revoked McEnaney's appointment as a sergeant. This left McEnaney a corporal until his conviction at a court martial on 17 February of conduct prejudicial to good order. He was reduced to the rank of private second class. Robert's patience with the man had run out. McEnaney would be dismissed from the service in September.²⁴

Disciplinary problems may have induced Robert to hope for a speedy relief from duty. Instead, he found himself exploring roads again. At about the same time Robert's men completed the bridge project, Lieutenant Casey returned to Fort Vancouver. He had cut a route as far as the Kalama River and there concluded that the road was not feasible. He reported this opinion to General Harney, who was still on duty, and obtained a sick leave. Harney rejected Casey's report and turned the task over to Henry Robert. To Robert's satisfaction, the general claimed he would not believe the task impossible till the young lieutenant told him so. Robert resolved to cut the road. The men at first refused to believe they had been ordered to continue the road. Instead, the soldiers held high hopes of soon returning to New York. By the Fourth of July they had been fully disabused of this idea. Robert turned to his new task with 36 mules, 29 men and 5 civilians.²⁵

On 5 July 1860, Robert divided Company A into two detachments. The first, under a Sergeant Wheeler, was to build a road along the trail cut by Lieutenant Casey from Fort

²⁴ Orders to Company, Fort Cascades, Washington Territory, 7 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Special Order No. 20, Signed by Alfred Pleasonton, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 17 February 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Peck, *The Pig War*, 144, 151, 157-160, 182.

²⁵ Corrections to Thompson's History of U. S. Engineer Troops, HMR Papers, reel 4, Memorandum of Services of Colonel Henry M. Robert, HMR Papers, reel 7, Peck, *The Pig War*, 165, 169-171.

Vancouver to the Lewis River. The second, under a Sergeant Smith, went ahead to reconnoiter the country from the Kalama River to Cowlitz Landing. By 10 July, Robert had a better grasp of the task before him. Based on Thomas Casey's estimates and his own observations, Robert concluded that Casey had been partially correct. To build a complete road to Cowlitz Landing would take more men, money and time than could reasonably be allotted. Still, Robert refused to quit. He decided to resolve the situation by cutting a pack trail. It would take only one summer, he felt, to cut a path connecting Fort Vancouver with Cowlitz Landing. This would provide the army with a supply trail that it could complete or alter at leisure. Eventually, the wagon road could be extended along the pack trail. On 14 July, Robert communicated his recommendation to Captain James A. Hardie, the acting assistant adjutant general of the department. While awaiting departmental confirmation, he proceeded with his plans.²⁶

To chart a serviceable route more quickly, Robert sought out someone who knew the area well. He finally located a guide named Old Salmon Man. The guide, reputed to be over one hundred years old, felt that much of Casey's trouble came from not having a good guide. On the morning of Monday, 16 July, Robert set out to blaze a trail accompanied by Old Salmon Man, the old guide's son; Sergeant Smith; an artificer from the company named Schlag; and two civilians named Johnson and Ladieu. Robert

²⁶ Peck, *The Pig War*, 169-172; Orders to Company, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 3 July 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, Camp on North Branch of the Kalama River, Washington Territory, to J[ames] A. Hardie, [Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory], 14 July 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1. Again, neither Robert's papers nor Peck's journal indicate the first names of most of the soldiers in the company.

ordered the work detail to continue cutting the trail, following the route the survey party would lay out.²⁷

The trip proved to be a grueling experience for Henry Robert. Johnson broke trail, directed by Old Salmon Man. Ladieu came next. In addition to his own pack, Ladieu carried Robert's overcoat, blankets and seven pounds of bread. Robert carried a haversack with a vest, shirt, collar, cravat, waterproof shoes, moccasins, and mosquito net. He also carried an axe, staff, revolver and ammunition, and a hunting knife. In the pockets of his hunting shirt, Robert had a compass, prayer book, tracts and papers. Smith and Schlag brought up the rear, blazing the trail as they went. Each carried their packs, axes and two days provisions. Along the way, the party snacked on red whortleberries and enjoyed the view of Mount Saint Helen's. Robert noted everyone carried an equal share of the burden save himself. Ladieu had to shoulder Robert's portion, carrying a load Robert noted "would kill me in a short time." The trip still proved increasingly difficult and exhausting for the lieutenant. After only a few miles, Robert traded his shoes for moccasins. After seven hours, the party had gone only seven miles at most. Between rests and a scouting foray by the guide, the party only managed five hours of effective travel time.²⁸

By ten o'clock Tuesday morning, the party had reached high ground with a view of both the Columbia and Kalama Rivers. Fog obscured the Cowlitz. The group stopped

²⁷ Peck, *The Pig War*, 173-174; Journal of Cowlitz Landing Expedition, HMR Papers, reel 1.

²⁸ Ibid.

for fifteen minutes every hour and made camp at around five that afternoon. By noon Wednesday, Robert could carry only a canteen and needed an extended rest at lunch, as he was "completely used up." Then the party resumed its way, climbing hills and plateaus, and descending steep, boggy inclines, which, Robert noted, would make the task of road building very difficult. The party finally made camp at four o'clock. The expedition set out at six-thirty the next morning, Thursday, 19 July. An hour later, Robert again traded his shoes for moccasins and removed his military blouse. His pants soon followed. Fever had set in and movement became increasingly difficult. After the midday stop for dinner, Ladieu convinced Robert to divide the remainder of the lieutenant's pack items between himself and Johnson so they could make one long march.²⁹

Throughout the trip, Robert kept a journal. The entry on the nineteenth was the last until Saturday, 4 August, after he had returned to Fort Vancouver in accordance with orders issued 24 July. At Vancouver, Robert reported his successful progress. Using an existing Indian trail, the engineering company could finish cutting the supply line. Unable to use the Vancouver packet boat, Robert and Sergeant Smith left early Friday morning in an effort to obtain horses which they could ride back to the engineering detachment on the Kalama. Robert settled for a pack mule as a mount and Smith found a horse. The exhausted men arrived on the Kalama at five-thirty Saturday morning.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Peck, *The Pig War*, 175-179; Journal of Cowlitz Landing Expedition, HMR Papers, reel 1; Orders, Signed by James A. Hardie, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 24 July 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1.

By 22 August, Colonel George Wright, then commanding the department, had made a final decision regarding the road project. Robert previously had been instructed to take Company A back to Fort Vancouver. Noting that Robert had fulfilled his mission, Wright instead ordered him to take his command to Fort Steilacoom. There, Robert was to turn the company over to Thomas Casey, who had recovered from his illness, and to prepare a map and full report of the supply road expedition. As Robert perused his orders, he finally came to a sentence which read: "He will then upon being relieved by 2nd Lieut. E. P. Alexander Engineers repair to Washington City" and report to the War Department. He had finally been granted his relief. All work was finished by 1 September and the company proceeded to Fort Steilacoom. Sergeant Smith was so sick and exhausted that he had to be carried on a litter.³¹

While at Steilacoom, Robert and Lieutenant Casey drilled the engineer company in the preparation of siege materials. Thomas Casey's father, Colonel Silas Casey, still commanded the fort. Finally, on 17 September 1860, Porter Alexander arrived and Robert was free to go. Though Alexander's wife, Bettie, caught malaria on the trip across Panama, they enjoyed their time at Fort Steilacoom. Porter Alexander later reflected on the experience as having been the last days of his youth and the Alexanders established a lasting friendship with the Caseys. Southern secession shattered this idyllic existence. Southern-born officers, like Henry Robert and Porter Alexander, finally had to examine

³¹ Peck, *The Pig War*, 178-180, 184; Corrections to Thompson's History of U. S. Engineer Troops, HMR Papers, reel 4; Special Orders No. 96, Department of Oregon, Signed by James A. Hardie, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 22 August 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Note of Order Received, Camp on Toutle Lake, 28 or 29 August 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Extract of Special Order No. 104, [Department of Oregon], Signed by George Wright, n.p., 29 August 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1.

their loyalties. Porter Alexander quickly chose to stand by Georgia. Henry Robert could not so easily resolve to stand by South Carolina.³²

³² Corrections to Thompson's History of U. S. Engineer Troops, HMR Papers, reel 4; Special Orders No. 96, Department of Oregon, Signed by James A. Hardie, Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory, 22 August 1860, HMR Papers, reel 1; Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 14-28.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CIVIL WAR YEARS

Secession brought a waking nightmare to Adeline Lawton Robert. Still very much attached to her family in the South, her loyalty to her husband forced her to live out the war in the North. Communications with her family became sparse and she lived with the fear of lost affections. She knew her brothers would support the Confederacy, and they did. As the crisis deepened into war, letters from home brought Adeline news that brothers George, Edward and Alexander all joined Confederate service. Alexander Robert Lawton, her favorite, eventually became quartermaster general of the Confederate armies. Adeline counted on him to pass on her correspondence and to keep her memory fresh in her father's mind. Letters she received from Alexander and Edward buoyed her spirits and brought much needed affirmation of her family's love.¹

Adeline feared a terrible possibility might become reality--a meeting of her brothers and son on the field of battle. The thought of such a meeting made her ill, her only solace in the prayer that God might spare her (and them). Adeline partly blamed the

¹ Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, n.p., May 1861, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 8 June 1861, Lawton Papers UNC. Edward Lawton was killed at Fredericksburg. See Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 186, 580, n.38.

press for heating up public sentiment until northerners felt they had to "contend for their existence as a Government." Reading only radical statements fueled belief in the arguments of fire-eaters North and South. She refused to believe that the common citizens of the sections hated each other. She felt that those who drove Americans to war would have to pay a terrible price at God's hand. In response to bad publicity for the South, she undertook a private campaign to acquaint her neighbors with her family. She particularly lauded the virtues of Alexander. She also urged Henry to resign his commission if he could not escape battle.²

Adeline's arguments to Henry were complicated by his recent marriage. The Roberts were friends with the family of Dr. Ebenezer Thresher of Dayton, Ohio. Henry, still convalescing from his service on the Pacific coast, married Helen Marie Thresher on 17 December 1860. Adeline hoped to capitalize on her son's avowed distaste for the war, but felt she could not insist that Henry forfeit the means of supporting a wife and family. Still, it appeared that she might get her wish. Prior to the secession of South Carolina, Henry decided to resign his commission and provisionally accepted a professorship which would take him south. Though he would have been separated from his parents, he could have ridden out the conflict in much the same fashion as his father and brothers.³

² Quote from Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, n.p., May 1861, Lawton Papers UNC. Spelling in original; Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 8 June 1861, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 11 November 1861, Lawton Papers UNC.

³ Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 8 June 1861, Lawton Papers UNC; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7. The sketch here reflects sources indicating that the wedding took place on 17 December 1860. The biographical outline accompanying materials deposited in the

Secession forced Henry to examine his conscience and loyalties. He had never seriously questioned the doctrine of nullification and believed states had the right to secede. He still felt that South Carolina had a right to withdraw from the Union and that duty demanded he act in the best interest of his native state. Now that theory and duty were to be tested, however, he wanted to think through the implications of the test logically. He felt compelled to support or oppose secession based on his personal conclusions as to the best interests of South Carolina. Based on the evidence before him, Robert decided that any political system which utilized secession could not survive, but must disintegrate into warring factions. To Henry Robert's sensibilities concerning order, efficiency and cooperative progress, the chaos of civil strife was anathema. He concluded secession had to be utterly destroyed.⁴

Henry delayed writing his anxious parents until he had time to carefully explain his views. His decision meant fresh waves of anxiety for Adeline. In June, she finally wrote Alexander James Lawton of Henry's choice. She pressed her father to believe in his grandson's continued love, but confessed that Henry saw the issue so differently than he and was "surrounded by such influences" that she abandoned all hope of seeing the two

Library of Congress (HMR Papers, reel 1) notes a wedding date of 24 December 1860. This ambiguity is reflected throughout the record, though there is agreement that the wedding took place in Dayton. A sketch written for Miller's *Our Family Circle* by Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., simply states that the wedding took place in December and does not attempt to affix a day (see pp.260-264). Though the Roberts and Threshers are noted as close, the exact history of the relationship and of Henry Robert's courtship of Helen Thresher is not recorded. Evidence in letterheads and correspondence does indicate that the Thresher family was active in a linseed oil business and in the religious and political life of Ohio.

⁴ Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 8 June 1861, Lawton Papers UNC; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7, Edgar Jadwin, "Henry Martyn Robert," Annual Report to the Association of the

agree. Her continued fears oppressed her so greatly that she could no longer deal with the mental anguish connected with writing her son. She turned the matter over to God. Though the deepening war frequently depressed both Adeline and Joseph Thomas Robert, the couple coped through prayer and the distractions of hard work. Adeline drew added comfort from the ministering presence of daughter Mattie, while Joseph's concentration was aided by son James, then in preparation for his bar examinations. James was admitted to the bar in August 1861.⁵

Henry Robert was in Annapolis, Maryland, when he heard that Confederate forces had fired on Fort Sumter. He immediately took a train to Washington, D.C., to make his services available. At the end of April, he was detailed to the staff of Major John G. Barnard, the chief engineer in charge of the capital's defenses. There Robert joined old comrade David C. Houston in constructing fortifications around Washington and in field service in northern Virginia. Taking part in the seizure of Arlington Heights and Alexandria, Robert crossed the Potomac with forces moving via the Long Bridge on 24 May 1861. He then settled into the construction of fortifications. Henry Robert was finally engaged in performing the duties of an engineer as he had imagined them in his northwestern tour. He also received a promotion to first lieutenant in August 1861.⁶

Graduates of the United States Military Academy, 11 June 1925. Copy in HMR SCL 1651, 1-2.

⁵ Quote from Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 8 June 1861, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 11 November 1861, Lawton Papers UNC; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; Jadwin, "Henry Martyn Robert," HMR SCL 1651, 1-2.

⁶ There is no explanation as to why Robert was in Maryland. Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; Orders signed by A. G. Wright, Washington, D.C., 29 April 1861, HMR

Serving around the capital, Robert made a brief active contribution to the Union war effort. He still had not recovered fully from malaria and the rigors of service in the Washington Territory. The renewed strain of war service soon broke his health almost entirely. By October, he had to be removed from duty with the Division of the Potomac and sent to Philadelphia. There he assumed responsibility for the defenses of the city and the construction of a breakwater in the Delaware River. Major Barnard, who praised Robert for efficient work, was perhaps the more eager to have him placed in less strenuous circumstances because another assistant engineer, Lieutenant George W. Snyder, had died from exhaustion caused by overwork. Like Robert, Snyder was already ill when he joined Barnard's staff. The loss of one promising young officer seemed enough, so Robert traded posts with a Lieutenant M. D. McAlester.⁷

The change did nothing to help Robert's failing health. By February 1862, Chief of Engineers Joseph G. Totten took steps to relieve pressure on the young lieutenant. Totten sent word to Robert not to worry so much about the construction of defenses and to rest.

Papers, reel 1; Special Order No. 19, Headquarters, Department of Northeastern Virginia, Arlington, Virginia, 2 July 1861, HMR Papers, reel 1; Report of Major General S[amuel] P[eter] Heintzelman, USA, Headquarters, Department of Washington, to General L[orenzo] Thomas, Adjutant General, USA, Washington, D.C., 20 July 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), 40-41.

⁷ George W. Snyder finished West Point one year ahead of Henry Robert. He came to the Department of the Potomac from Fort Sumter. Special Order No. 281, War Department, Adjutant General's Office, Washington, D.C., 17 October 1861, HMR Papers, reel 1; Report of Major J[ohn] G. Barnard, Major of Engineers, Brigadier General [of Volunteers], Chief Engineers, Army of the Potomac, to General J[oseph] G. Totten, Chief of Engineers, Washington, D.C., 10 December 1861, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st ser., vol. 5 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881), 678-684; *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U. S. Military Academy* (1856), 17.

David Houston was sent to help carry the burden. Totten hoped Robert would finally get adequate rest.⁸

Robert appreciated the opportunity to recuperate, but it also disturbed him. He communicated his distress to General Totten on 15 February 1862. He had to admit that the work would go more smoothly with Houston present and confessed he had not answered Totten's letter sooner because he lacked the strength to write. Still, he resisted giving up all duties. Totten had been vague as to whether Robert should relieve himself from all duty or was ordered to do so. Bad weather had prevented work at Fort Mifflin, the main fortification with which Robert had been charged. This lightened his work load and while allowing him to feel useful. "It may be a whim," Robert argued, "but as I am the only one of my family or kindred in the supporting [*sic*] the Government whilst most of my relations are in arms against it (including ten uncles) I feel anxious as long as this war lasts to be on duty."⁹

Totten then reminded Robert that his orders relieving the young lieutenant arose from concern for his feeble health. Should Robert feel well enough to attend to light duties without harm, he could stay at Fort Mifflin. If so, then Robert should inform Houston that Totten's orders had been suspended. If his health left him incapacitated,

⁸ [Illegible] for Joseph G. Totten, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 3 February 1862, HMR Papers, reel 1; Joseph G. Totten, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 6 February 1862, HMR Papers, reel 1; Special Order No. 36, Headquarters, Army of the Potomac, Washington, D.C., 6 February 1862, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Joseph G. Totten, Washington, D.C., 15 February 1862, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, New Bedford, Massachusetts, to R[ichard] Delafield, Washington, D.C., 4 August 1864, HMR Papers, reel 1.

then the orders would go into effect. Despite his best efforts, Robert finally succumbed to exhaustion. He confined his activities to minimal duties at Fort Mifflin while Houston supervised more active work in the area.¹⁰

By the spring of 1862, Robert recovered sufficiently to move to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he supervised the construction of defenses against attacks by Confederate commerce raiders. He had not completely recovered, however, and he continued to experience frustration at his inability to perform his duties. He finally realized he would not see field service in the war and chafed at his limitations even in garrison duty. Still, he had found a way to contribute to the cause. Some compensation came on 3 March 1863, when he received his promotion to captain.¹¹

In New Bedford, Robert gained a new interest. Robert's concern over his health revealed an understandable aversion to matters he could not control. In the army, military discipline helped officers like Henry Robert to resolve conflict and to make decisions. Civilian organizations could be quite different. Robert received a shocking reminder of this in 1863 when he attended a public meeting at the First Baptist Church concerning local defense. The assembly unexpectedly elected him chairman. He had no idea how to proceed, yet dared not refuse, lest he provide his critics with evidence of his

⁹ Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Joseph G. Totten, Washington, D.C., 15 February 1862, HMR Papers, reel 1. Spelling and punctuation in original.

¹⁰ Joseph G. Totten, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 25 February 1862, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, New Bedford, Massachusetts, to R[ichard] Delafield, Washington, D.C., 4 August 1864, HMR Papers, reel 1.

¹¹ Henry Martyn Robert, New Bedford, Massachusetts, to R[ichard] Delafield, Washington, D.C., 4 August 1864, HMR Papers, reel 1; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; Sketches of Fort Phoenix, New Bedford, appear in HMR Papers, reel 8.

ignorance. So, he "plunged in trusting to Providence that the assembly would behave itself." Apparently, things went smoothly enough, but Robert vowed never to attend another meeting without some idea of how to manage parliamentary procedure. He was amazed to discover that no uniform guide existed and that little had been published on the subject at all. He had to settle for a few basic rules gleaned from a compendium of general knowledge. Robert wrote his first rules of order on a note card he could keep in his pocket. From that point, his interest in parliamentary law grew until he determined to write a manual which could help others avoid the sort of embarrassment he had felt in New England.¹²

By August 1864, Robert had become tired of duty in New Bedford. He enjoyed life there and appreciated the benefits of the medical care he received, but he hated his continued reliance on aides. He wanted a duty assignment suitable to his physical condition. On 4 August 1864, he wrote a formal request for transfer. Since Joseph Totten had died suddenly of pneumonia on 22 April 1864, Robert's letter went to the new chief of engineers, Brigadier General Richard Delafield. Robert outlined his health

¹² Quote from Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 22-24; Unpublished Preface (1 May 1874), HMR Papers, reel 6; Ware, "Order, Please!" 42; Sarah Corbin Robert, "Information Sheet for the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Publication of *Rules of Order*," (19 February 1951), in HMR Papers, reel 7; "Authors and Editors," *Publisher's Weekly* 197: 11 (1970): 15-16; Hodding Carter, "The Clubwoman's Best Friend," *Saturday Evening Post*, 19 August 1961, 57; Don H. Doyle, "Rules of Order: Henry Martyn Robert and the Popularization of American Parliamentary Law," *American Quarterly* 32 (Spring 1980): 7; Avis Miller Pillsbury, *The Genealogy of the First Baptist Church of New Bedford, Massachusetts, With Roots Deeply Imbedded in the History of Plymouth, Dartmouth, and New Bedford, Including a Record of Its Growth and Influence, 1813-1979*, with an account of the acceptance of the 1829 Meeting House in the National Register of Historic Places by Mildred Hatch (New Bedford, MA: Reynolds-DeWalt Printing, Inc., 1979; copy in the New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts), 33-36; *History of the First Baptist Church* (New Bedford, Massachusetts) (Bulletin Insert

problems since he first contracted malaria and how it had affected his service to date. Realizing that field service would be too demanding physically, he asked Delafield to return him to the United States Military Academy to teach mathematics or natural philosophy. He reminded Delafield that he had taught both subjects before and could teach them again without straining his health. He argued, "The consciousness of success & of the fact of my being of some service to the world, together with the daily intellectual contact with the students, will have the effect of producing a new life mental and physical in me." He could finally perform his duties at full capacity and make a valuable contribution. His current dissatisfaction was revealed when he confessed, "No man can be contented while in a field of labor where owing to circumstances he is unsuperatively [*sic*] useless if he feels there is another where his labors would produce much greater results." The birth of Robert's first child, Helen Marie, may have also encouraged him to seek a less strenuous environment.¹³

Prepared for the Anniversary Committee for the 150th Anniversary of the Church, 1979).

¹³ Quotes from Henry Martyn Robert, New Bedford, Massachusetts, to R[ichard] Delafield, Washington, D.C., 4 August 1864, HMR Papers, reel 1. Spelling and punctuation in original; Stewart Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War* (New York: Facts on File Publications, 1988), 177, 659; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; Joseph Thomas Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 20 November 1865, Lawton Papers UNC. In Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 260-261, a birthdate is listed only for Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., born 21 January 1874. Robert's papers do not help in fixing birthdates. The letter to Alexander J. Lawton helps locate the birth of Helen, Jr. A second child, Mary Louisa, died in infancy, which is not mentioned. Henry and Helen's third child was Corinne, followed by Henry, Jr., and, finally, by Portia. Joseph Thomas Robert mentions in a letter to Alexander J. Lawton dated 28 July 1868 that Henry and Helen were in San Francisco with two daughters. It is not clear if the second child was Mary Louisa or Corinne. Joseph Thomas Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 28 July 1868, Lawton Papers UNC.

Delafield finally granted his request in 1865 and Robert returned to West Point to take charge of the Department of Practical Military Engineering. In that capacity, he drilled cadets in the application of engineering techniques, sat on the academic board, and supervised engineer troops posted at West Point. He also served as the academy treasurer. Robert taught at West Point until the autumn of 1867. After his promotion to major on 7 March 1867, he received orders to report to Major General Henry Wager Halleck in San Francisco for staff duty as chief engineer of the Military Department of the Pacific. While his war service could scarcely have conformed to his hopes in 1861, he had profited by it. He had supported the war effort without permanently breaking his health and he had managed to find a niche to which he was well suited. When so many officers lost rank or position in the post-war army, Robert received a promotion.¹⁴

Robert had also avoided the terrible battlefield experience his mother had so feared. While this fate had been averted, the war and its aftermath had not been entirely kind to Henry's family. Adeline suffered through the war on prayer and hope. She regularly wrote letters which she knew her family in the South might never read. The close of the war brought economic troubles for her family in South Carolina and the fear that the federal government might try her brother Alexander for his war service. Though she longed to help her kin, there was little she could do.¹⁵

¹⁴ Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7, Special Order 435, 5 September 1867, HMR Papers, reel 1; Special Order 447, Extract, 19 September 1867, HMR Papers, reel 1.

¹⁵ Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 11 November 1861, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, n.p., 8 May 1862, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 5 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC.

The thought that she and her children had lost the love of her father and favorite brother distressed Adeline most of all. She expressed continued love and admiration at every opportunity and sought affirmation of the same. The war made it difficult to maintain close relations and challenged the legal loyalties of all parties. In compliance with federal orders, Joseph Thomas Robert forbade his wife from mailing letters to southern relatives. She found at least one opportunity to evade this rule when away from home. Her letters made their way south in sporadic packets. Confederate property and estate laws forced Alexander James Lawton to be creative in securing for Adeline an inheritance in case of his death. Any property she inherited could be confiscated. He pledged his sons to reserve for their sister a cash settlement taken from their own shares. The settlement was to be adjusted to cover a note owed by Joseph Thomas Robert to Alexander R. Lawton in regard to an estate settlement in which Lawton served as executor. Alexander J. Lawton had stood surety on the note and meant it to be paid in full. Should Henry Robert or his brothers take an active role in the war against the South, Adeline was to receive the interest on her share only, adjusted to pay the note. Fortunately, these measures were never tested.¹⁶

¹⁶ Adeline's letters home were kept in a packet for her brother. These finally found their way south. Adeline Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, n.p., 8 May 1862, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, n.p., July 1863, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 15 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Mattie Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 26 November 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 13 January 1866, Lawton Papers UNC; Mattie Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 30 December 1866, Lawton Papers UNC; Alexander James Robert, Mulberry Grove, South Carolina, to his sons, 21 February 1862, Lawton Papers UNC; Will of Alexander James Lawton, 21 February 1862, Lawton Papers UNC; Will of

The issue of the note serves as a reminder of the Robert family's own economic distress. Prices ran high and the family had not fully recovered from the loss of their property in the panic of 1857. Now the Joseph Thomas and Adeline Robert found themselves supporting their adult children. The opportunities to teach at Burlington and at Iowa State provided a barely adequate income. Assisted by Mattie, Adeline made do with garden vegetables, old clothes, linens, and utensils. Adeline felt that her husband did more manual labor during the war than all the rest of his life; his wife and daughter helped as best they could. Times were quite different from the days of Joseph and Adeline's youth.¹⁷

After passing the bar, James moved to New York to study theology. He returned in 1865 for a brief stint to teach at Burlington. When he became engaged to a wealthy young girl from New Bedford, Mattie was pleased that at least some member of the family would have access to money. James and his wife Agnes finally settled in at Vassar College, where James taught. Joe married in 1864, and the expense of the wedding strained family finances. Joe and his wife Hattie moved back in with the Roberts when failing health and eyesight forced him to give up teaching and the ministry. He looked for some business opportunity and finally opened a drug store. Undercapitalized, Joe could not compete and shifted over to an oil and paint business.

Alexander James Lawton, 1 October 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Will of Alexander James Lawton, 9 June 1867, Lawton Papers UNC.

¹⁷ Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 5 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 15 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Mattie Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 26 November 1865, Lawton Papers UNC.

When his father returned to Burlington in 1867 or 1868, Joe remained in Iowa City. Apparently, Joseph Thomas, Mattie, and Joe Robert expected limited help from Henry and James at this time. Joseph Thomas noted that his sons had good incomes but high expenses to meet. Helen, he observed, had a taste for the extravagant which, along with high prices in San Francisco, drained away Henry's income. For the time being, father, son and daughter bore their troubles on their own.¹⁸

By this point, Adeline could no longer help them. Just as Henry Martyn Robert saw life return to normal, he lost his mother. On 4 June 1866, Joseph Thomas Robert wrote a sad letter to his father-in-law from Dayton, Ohio. Three months before, Adeline had become very ill. She had uterine cancer, which her husband may or may not have known at the time. Recovering a little, she wanted to visit friends in Dayton, where she hoped that the change and more experienced doctors would help. Mattie took her to Ohio, but by the end of May, Adeline became worse and her husband was summoned. She had developed acute peritonitis, and while her doctors expressed guarded optimism, Joseph Thomas Robert knew his wife was dying.¹⁹

¹⁸ Adeline Robert, Ottumwa, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 5 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Adeline Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 15 August 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Mattie Robert, Iowa City, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 26 November 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Joseph Thomas Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 28 July 1868, Lawton Papers UNC.

¹⁹ Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 366; Joseph Thomas Robert, Dayton, Ohio, to Major Porter, Savannah, Georgia, 4 June 1866, Lawton Papers UNC; Joseph Thomas Robert, Dayton, Ohio, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 4 June 1866, Lawton Papers UNC.

Adeline's death by 6 June meant Alexander James Lawton had little cause to maintain contact with her family. One item remained to trouble them--the note owed Alexander Robert Lawton. Both Lawtons meant for the note to be paid in full, but Joseph Thomas Robert lacked the funds to honor his obligation. He expressed some surprise at the bitterness of their demands and their refusal to commute even part of the total. When the elder Lawton finally communicated with his son-in-law through Mattie in July 1868, the note remained unpaid. At the time, Joseph Thomas Robert was giving serious consideration to declaring bankruptcy. He had sold several plots of land on long terms, and realized that the income would not meet his immediate obligations. He wanted to consult with his brother-in-law, but Alexander R. Lawton was away in Europe. Fearing for the family reputation, Mattie urged her father to find some other means of dealing with his difficulties. He finally decided to liquidate all of his property. He hoped this sale, combined with the previous sales and notes due, could pay off the debt and "satisfy you all." Henry Robert helped his father by forgiving a twenty-five hundred dollar note.²⁰

Health concerns finally took Joseph Thomas Robert south again in 1870. Here he found a new opportunity for service as the first president of the Augusta Bible Institute in 1871. The school had been started in Augusta, Georgia, in 1867 to give freedmen in the

²⁰ Quote from Joseph Thomas Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 28 July 1868, Lawton Papers UNC; Will of Alexander James Lawton, 1 October 1865, Lawton Papers UNC; Will of Alexander James Lawton, 9 June 1867, Lawton Papers UNC; Joseph Thomas Robert, Burlington, Iowa, to Alexander Robert Lawton, Savannah, Georgia, 13 July 1866, Lawton Papers UNC; Alexander Robert Lawton, Savannah, Georgia, to Alexander James Lawton, Robertville, South Carolina, 31 July 1866, Lawton Papers UNC; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to James Robert, Dayton, Illinois, 8 May 1887, HMR Papers, reel 3.

area an educational opportunity, both general and ministerial. The Reverends William J. White and Henry Watts, along with the deacons at the venerable Springfield Baptist Church had begun the work, aided by the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the Freedmen's Bureau. No classes were held in 1869-1870, but Joseph Thomas Robert was asked to supervise the school when it re-opened on recently acquired property. Under his able leadership the institute grew. He supervised its transfer to Atlanta in 1879 as the Atlanta Baptist Seminary, and continued as its president until his death in 1884. In 1913, the seminary changed its name to Morehouse College, in honor of Henry Lyman Morehouse, corresponding secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Joseph Thomas Robert left his children an admirable legacy. Henry and his siblings honored their father by continuing an interest in the education of freedmen, most evidently by Henry's donations of parliamentary guides and *Rules of Order* as textbooks. Henry Robert's papers specifically note donations of books to Atlanta Baptist Seminary, Atlanta, Georgia, in 1896; Walker Baptist Insititute, Augusta, Georgia, in 1894, and Bishop Baptist College, Marshall, Texas, in 1882.²¹

²¹ Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 24 November 1896, HMR Papers, reel 5; S. W. Culver, Marshall, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, [Milwaukee, Wisconsin], 2 January 1882, HMR Papers, reel 1; G. A. Goodwin, Augusta, Georgia, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 26 December 1893, HMR Papers, reel 2; G. A. Goodwin, Augusta, Georgia, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 20 November 1894, HMR Papers, reel 2; William E. Holmes, Atlanta, Georgia, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 14 December 1896. William E. Holmes, Atlanta, Georgia, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 29 December 1896; Joseph Thomas Robert, Sr., *Historical Sketch of the Augusta Institute for the Education of Freedmen Preachers and Teachers Founded at Augusta, Ga., in 1870 by the American Baptist Home Mission Society*, prepared at the request of the corresponding secretary of the [American Baptist Home Mission] Society (n.p.: n.p., this copy dated 1 May 1878; copy in Richmond County Historical Collection, Reese Library, Augusta State University, Augusta, Georgia), 1-10; Brawley, *History of Morehouse College*, 9-25, 31-37, 137, 175-178; Edward J. Cashin, *Old Springfield: Race and Religion in Augusta, Georgia*

While his family dealt with the after-effects of the war, Henry Martyn Robert labored at his duties in the Department of the Pacific under Generals Henry Wager Halleck, George H. Thomas, and John M. Schofield. Robert's second experience on the West Coast was quite different from his first. Until 1871, he resided in San Francisco, where he participated in the religious, civic and cultural life of the city. When he moved north to Oregon and the Washington Territory again, he lived in Portland. Here he supervised harbor improvements in Portland, improvements to the Columbia River, and fortifications and lighthouses in Oregon and the Washington Territory. This work bore virtually no resemblance to his field service before the Civil War.²²

One of Robert's more memorable experiences of the period was a tour of southwestern posts in January and February 1868. Robert enjoyed meeting the people, touring historic mission sites, and learning about adobe architecture. Robert thought enough of the trip to retain most of his notes, and with some reason. General Thomas had Robert write up his itinerary and this was published in 1869. This was Robert's modest introduction to writing published works. In 1873 he moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, for his next assignment. This involved supervising lighthouses and river and harbor improvements. Robert was also ready for a new challenge in writing. His activities in the religious and civic organizations of San Francisco had helped to convince

(Augusta, GA: The Springfield Village Park Foundation, Inc., 1995), 53-56. Professor Cashin incorrectly identifies Joseph Thomas Robert as the son of Henry Martyn Robert, but does make note of Henry Robert's gift of one thousand copies of *Rules of Order*, which ended up used as textbooks. Cashin, *Old Springfield*, 55.

²² Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 3.

him that the American people needed a uniform manual of parliamentary procedure.

Robert had resolved to write that manual.²³

²³ Notes on Southwestern Tour, 1868, HMR Papers, reel 1; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; Henry Martyn Robert, *Itineraries of Routes in Arizona and Southern California*, published on order of Major General George H. Thomas (San Francisco: Engineer's Office, Military Department of the Pacific, 1869).

CHAPTER FIVE

RULES OF ORDER

In San Francisco, Henry Martyn Robert participated actively in civic and church organizations. His interests in San Francisco included promoting a Chinese Sunday school supported by the First Baptist Church, and serving as treasurer of the Society for Fallen Women, a mission to prostitutes. He was a trustee of the First Baptist Church and vice-president of the San Francisco Young Men's Christian Association. His participation in these activities reinforced the experience he first had in New Bedford in 1863. To conduct business adequately, clubs, churches and other organizations needed a well-informed and competent moderator, skilled in the knowledge of parliamentary procedure and committed to democratic expression. Unfortunately, he observed, such officers were generally lacking.¹

Robert's diverse activities brought him into a working relationship with people from all over the United States, each with their own regional understanding of parliamentary systems and procedures. Brought together in an organizational meeting, these people

¹ Ware, "Order, Please!" 43; Doyle, "Rules of Order," 9-11, Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Draft Report of Committee on Chinese Sabbath School, San Francisco (1868), HMR Papers, reel 1.

might find few common rules. The result could be chaos, which wasted time and efficiency. In other cases, an assertive presiding officer or member could use a personal interpretation of parliamentary law to dominate organizational decisions. Robert felt this suppressed the democratic voice. For Robert, democracy could not flourish where deliberative bodies were ruled by the twin tyrannies of "the mob that pretends to recognize no law" and arbitrary officers. As the organizational spirit grew in American civic life, Robert concluded, one common parliamentary authority should guide the conduct of business. This would enable all Americans to participate equally in organizations within a common system of deliberation. Business could be conducted quickly and efficiently, without sacrificing democratic participation and discussion. No matter where a person lived, he or she could participate easily and equally in the decisions of local organizations. A common parliamentary system would free all citizens from the tyranny of arbitrary authority.²

Interested in finding a common authority the local societies could use, Robert resumed his study of parliamentary law. He discovered that, as he had envisioned it, no standard authority existed. A local bookstore offered a copy of Luther Stearns Cushing's authoritative parliamentary manual and a second source called *Wilson's Digest*. Believing the practices of Congress should guide local procedures, Robert also obtained

² Quote from *The Need for Rules of Order in Baptist Churches*, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Professor Judson, Chicago University, Chicago, Illinois, 25 January 1899, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; *Lecture on Parliamentary Law*, HMR Papers, reel 6.

the congressional manual and the rules of the House of Representatives, along with a work called Barclay's *Digest of Rules and Practices of the House*. The congressional manual included Thomas Jefferson's influential rules, first prepared for use by the United States Senate when Jefferson was vice-president.³

Robert found his task increasingly difficult. He was not impressed by the Barclay and Wilson digests, nor did Robert locate more satisfactory works later. Jefferson's guide and the manuals and rules of Congress, he found, were too specific to the workings of a legislature for use in local clubs and societies. Robert still believed the rules of Congress should guide American parliamentary practice, but some adaptation would have to occur before local organizations could benefit from the example. Cushing's manual, which was widely circulated, came the closest to a standard guide then in print. It was widely quoted as an authority in local meetings. Robert found Cushing's work too confusing and contradictory, and felt that it failed to present a usable system based on the procedures of

³ Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Doyle, "Rules of Order," 4-6; Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 23-24; Introduction to Henry Martyn Robert, *The Scott, Foresman Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 1990/9th ed., ed. Sarah Corbin Robert, Henry M. Robert III, William J. Evans, and James Cleary, with a Preface by Henry M. Robert III and William J. Evans (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, ScottForesman, 1990), xxxi-xl. Luther Stearns Cushing, clerk of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, had already established himself as a parliamentary authority when he published *Rules of Proceeding and Debate in Deliberative Assemblies and Manual of Parliamentary Practice* in 1845. Doyle points out the former (p. 5) and Smedley the latter, (p. 23) as an influence on Robert's work. Robert's papers do not specify how much of Cushing's work he consulted, but Cushing's *Manual* seems to have been the critical work. See also Luther Stearns Cushing, *Lex parliamentaria americana: Elements of the Law and Practice of Legislative Assemblies in the United States of America* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1856; reprint, Fred B. Rothman and Company, 1989), and Thomas Jefferson, *Jefferson's Parliamentary Writings: "Parliamentary Pocket-Book" and "A Manual of Parliamentary Practice,"* ed. with an Introduction by Wilbur Samuel Howell. Papers of Thomas Jefferson, 2d ser. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

Congress. He also noted that Cushing's rules meant whatever the presiding officer assumed they meant. Since the rules were fairly rigidly stated, this tended to confuse deliberations and provoke heated procedural discussions. Robert believed that the specific rules were not as important as the need for flexible rules which any capable presiding officer could understand and apply to a variety of circumstances. Indeed, overly specific rules strictly applied became a hindrance to the efficient conduct of business. While an admirable work, Cushing's manual could not serve as Robert's common guide. It was too complicated.⁴

The turning point for Robert came at a dinner in 1868. One of his dining companions was a man noted as the "best presiding officer on the Pacific Coast." His presence afforded the opportunity for an experiment. Robert asked him what he used as his parliamentary authority. Since Cushing's manual had originally been published in Boston and the man was a native New Englander, Robert was not surprised when he answered, "Cushing, of course." Robert then proceeded to quiz him on points of procedure. The man was surprised when Robert informed him that his rulings were in accordance with the practices of Congress, but not of Cushing. No one had dared challenge his interpretations before and Robert noted he was not pleased. Being informed he was the subject of an experiment may not have helped. The man's angry

⁴ Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Jennie Hindman, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 17 May 1900, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Comparison of Parliamentary Authorities, HMR Papers, reel 6; Unpublished Preface (1 May 1874), HMR Papers, reel 6.

response only reinforced Robert's convictions, however, that Cushing could not serve as the parliamentary standard for American societies. Despite his companion's dictatorial manner, Robert was convinced of his sincerity. He *believed* he was quoting Cushing and others were forced to rely on him for guidance. None of them were aware that he was constructing his own arbitrary system.⁵

Robert decided to begin work on a short manual of simple rules for use by the societies in which he and his wife participated. He worked out a sixteen-page guide which he had printed by the engineering department and began working on a more formal manual. He had about twelve pages of material prepared when two factors forced him to suspend his efforts. First, his transfer to Portland, Oregon, and an attendant increase in his work load denied him the time to write a manual. Second, he realized that a little manual for use by a few local societies would not solve the problem. It would simply add a new regional authority. Robert wanted the manual to set a national standard based upon the practices of Congress, but which avoided elements in the congressional system that would be inconvenient to non-legislative bodies. The situation demanded a manual published and marketed for the nation as a whole. Such a manual needed to be short, simple, flexible and inexpensive. It also needed to be accepted as the standard guide across the country, replacing Cushing and Jefferson. Robert saw the need, he saw the

⁵ Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6.

solution; he was willing to write the book. As long as he was preoccupied with engineering projects in the Northwest, however, he could do nothing about it.⁶

This deadlock ended in 1874 when Robert was posted to Milwaukee to oversee lighthouses and engineering projects for the local military district. His arrival late in December 1873 when the harbor was frozen over and most projects suspended meant he had three months of inactivity. Robert saw an opportunity to write his parliamentary guide and seek out a publisher. After putting his local office in order, he focused on his manual. He completed the bulk of the manuscript before his engineering responsibilities forced him to set it aside. In the fall, he found time to revise the manuscript and completed the project about October. He expected the printed manual to be fifty pages in length and to be priced at fifty cents a copy with a paper cover. All he needed was a publisher willing to take on the risk of printing and marketing.⁷

Robert forwarded a copy of his manuscript to D. Appleton and Company of New York, which returned it with a cursory note of refusal. Robert then worked out a deal for the largest local bookstore to publish one thousand copies with an option on ten thousand more. Profits would be split equally. By the time Robert had the manuscript ready for the printer, however, the bookstore withdrew its support. Robert then decided to risk the

⁶ Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547, Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Incomplete Copy of Rules of Order Printed in San Francisco, 1869, HMR Papers, reel 7.

⁷ Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton,

expense of printing the manual himself. He worked out an arrangement with a local job printer, Burdick and Armitage, to print four thousand copies. Robert furnished the paper himself and selected the thirteen fonts for the project. The printers purchased two of these fonts specifically for Robert's contract. The copies were set, proofed, and printed sixteen pages at a time. Printing began in January 1875, when Robert was again free from the distractions of his military responsibilities.⁸

When Henry Robert brought home the first sixteen pages of his *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order*, Helen Robert was not impressed. Henry had conceived the book as a simple and flexible rule book on parliamentary law. As such, it could reform American parliamentary law if it was adopted by a wide variety of organizations with different goals and purposes. It was meant to end disputes over the substance of parliamentary law, not to serve as a primer on parliamentary procedure. Societies could set their own procedural rules. Robert's approach was intentionally similar to that taken by Cushing, but with a more accessible format. He meant to simplify the rules and bring them more into conformity with the practices of Congress. Helen objected strongly. She noted that the first thing people would want to know was how to call a meeting to order and

Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6.

⁸ Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; D. Appleton and Company, New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1 May 1874, HMR Papers, reel 1. See also a handwritten manuscript of *The Pocket Manual of Rules of Order* from 1874 in HMR Papers, reel 6. Robert's papers do not name the bookstore which missed the opportunity to market his manual.

conduct it. Without that information, Henry's rules of order were largely useless. No one would know what to do with his rules.⁹

Henry agreed with Helen. What counted most was the ability to actually *use* a set of rules. He decided to add a second part to the manual as a common-sense primer on parliamentary procedure. Within two weeks he had doubled the length of his book and increased its practicality. Later in the year, as the manual's index went to the printer, consideration of an incident at a church meeting in Kentucky led Robert to stop printing. He decided to add a third part dealing with legal questions concerning the rights of organizations to discipline or expel members. By November, printing was complete save the title page. Robert still lacked a publisher and the resources to market his manual nationally.¹⁰

Robert, having been assured that the S. C. Griggs and Company of Chicago was a reputable publisher, sent the company a copy of *Rules of Order* with the publisher's name left off the title page. After two weeks, he received the book back with a note from S. C. Griggs, Sr., indicating an interest in speaking with Robert should he ever come to Chicago. This encouraging news balanced Robert's observation that the leaves of the

⁹ Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Doyle, "Rules of Order," 5-6.

¹⁰ Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., to H. T. Lucas, Howard, Pennsylvania, 31 March 1891, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Charles Kinney, Columbus, Ohio, 27 September 1897, HMR Papers, reel 5.

manual had not been cut. No one had bothered to read his book. Robert decided to travel to Chicago anyway, and to negotiate a deal with S. C. Griggs personally. In Chicago, he listened as Griggs noted the drawbacks of his project. Robert, an unknown author, Griggs asked incredulously, wanted to supplant Cushing as America's parliamentary authority? Griggs could see no market potential. Furthermore, amateurs had printed the book. Griggs felt that no publisher would want to risk an initial offering of more than five hundred copies. The risk was too great.¹¹

Robert agreed with Griggs and assured him that he would feel the same way if he were in the publisher's place. Then Robert tendered an offer that he trusted the publisher would not refuse. Robert told Griggs that he had printed four thousand copies for a good reason. He intended to give away one thousand copies to influential parliamentarians in every state. This would bring free publicity and opportunities for testimonials useful in advertising. It might gain the use of *Rules of Order* in influential circles across the country, sparking further interest. Copies would also be sent to leading newspapers. Robert also assured Griggs that he expected the remaining copies to last two years. The publisher would not have to print any more copies until he was sure the effort had

¹¹ Contract and Facts of Publication of Robert's Rules of Order (1912), HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3. Since the pages of the book Robert sent to S.C. Griggs and Company had been printed on larger sheets of paper which were folded over in the binding process, any reader would have to cut the edges with a knife to read the text. This was a common practice of the day which modern readers occasionally encounter in older copies of books. Since the pages had not been cut, Robert knew no one had bothered to read his book. Note the facts of publication were drawn up as part of dispute with Scott, Foresman and Company, which bought out S. C. Griggs in 1896, over the publisher's choice to allow other companies to publish earlier editions of *Rules of Order*, a practice the company continues today.

succeeded. In the meantime, Robert could use public response and criticism to revise the book as it was set to electrotype plates for further printing. If the book failed, this, of course, would not be necessary.¹²

The plan would leave the company responsible only for the cost of postage and advertising for the entire first printing. Griggs still insisted that he did not wish to continue publication if sales fell below five hundred copies per year. Robert countered that he did not wish to continue publication if sales fell below one thousand copies per year. Griggs was satisfied and ordered a contract drawn up. The contract gave Robert ten days to deliver the four thousand copies of *Rules of Order*. S. C. Griggs and Company would supervise the binding, for which Robert would pay twelve cents per copy. The company would then use eight hundred copies for advertising purposes, while Robert would receive two hundred copies with a right to obtain more. Robert would pay the publisher 40 percent of retail for each copy he received; Griggs and Company would pay Robert 40 percent of retail for each copy of the first printing they sold. In subsequent printings, Robert would receive fifty copies of the next one thousand printed, but no royalty. After that thousand, he would receive a royalty of 10 percent of retail. S. C. Griggs and Company retained sole right to publish unless the company allowed the book to go out of print for six months.¹³

¹²Contract and Facts of Publication of Robert's *Rules of Order* (1912), HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3.

¹³ *Ibid.*

Henry Robert and S. C. Griggs and Company signed the contract on 20 January 1876. Advance copies of the manual went out on 14 February and *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies* was formally published on 19 February 1876. It cost seventy-five cents. On 22 March, Robert wrote Griggs that he would begin revising the book immediately. Within four weeks, he had the electrotype plates ready for printing. It did not come quickly enough. Copies were being bought as fast as they could be sold. Colleges began ordering the manual as a textbook. Robert had no time to use critical response for his revisions. He added some material, which increased the length of the second printing from 176 pages to 192, but lacked the time for substantive editing. Despite the rush, all copies had been sold by the end of June. The stock which was to last two years had sold out and *Rules of Order* was already on backorder. New copies could not be shipped until the end of July. Robert's gambit had paid off, S. C. Griggs had a best seller. In the first year of publication, *Rules of Order* sold some seven thousand copies. By 1897, S. C. Griggs and Company and its publishing successor, Scott, Foresman and Company, sold over 190,000 copies and by 1924 sales reached three quarters of a million. In its first one hundred years of publication, *Robert's Rules of Order* sold three million copies.¹⁴

¹⁴ Contract and Facts of Publication of Robert's Rules of Order (1912), HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Glicksman, n.p., 20 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; S. Donald Robertson, [Head Librarian, Scott, Foresman and Company], Chicago, Illinois, to Don Doyle, Nashville, Tennessee, 26 July 1977, HMR SCL 9547. See an original copy of *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies* printed by Burdick and Armitage and published by S. C. Griggs (1876, 176 pages), in HMR Papers, reel 7. The cover title is *Robert's Rules of Order*, the short title by which the book is best known. Note that since each printing was edited before publication, the publisher treated each like a new edition. The earliest copy of *Rules of Order* located for this thesis was printed by S. C. Griggs and Company in 1892, just

Critics agreed that Robert had provided a manual which was simple, flexible and clear. The elements of the book's apparatus--the index, tables, cross-references--made any subject easy to locate quickly. Its pocket size meant it could be carried easily. The parliamentary primer in Part II, as Helen Robert had foreseen, made the book immeasurably more practical. People did not want to be experts on parliamentary law; they wanted to know how to run their meetings. *Rules of Order* was perfectly adapted to the needs of the public. As one review stated, "It is less cumbersome than Jefferson, more American than Cushing, and better adapted than either to the common wants of the masses."¹⁵

The "wants of the masses" explains the phenomenal success of the book. Robert had correctly estimated that a market existed for his manual. He had designed a book that this market would find tremendously accessible and practical. He had felt that these features would enable *Rules of Order* to supplant Cushing and benefit the American public as a whole. Yet, even Robert had underestimated the potential demand. The growth of "joinerism" in American society, with the proliferation of clubs, organizations and societies, had created an as yet untapped marketing opportunity. When *Rules of Order* appeared, it was virtually the only work of its kind, it quickly became *the* authority on how to conduct business. The key was its very *usefulness*. Anyone could understand

before the first substantive revision of the book. This revision, released in 1893, was different enough from the two 1876 editions to require separate copyright registration.

¹⁵ See reviews and testimonials in HMR Papers, reel 7; quote from review "Rules of Order," *The Evangel* (San Francisco), n.d., clipping in HMR Papers, reel 7.

and use it. Everyone could use it to participate in club business. As such societies grew in number, the demand for *Rules of Order* increased proportionately.¹⁶

What seemed to amaze everyone was that this practical publishing miracle had been worked by an army officer, not a professional writer, publisher or parliamentarian. Almost overnight, Major Henry Martyn Robert became the accepted authority on parliamentary law. Correspondence flooded in, seeking Robert's authoritative response on points of procedure and parliamentary law. These requests came from pastors, club presidents, and national presidents of organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution. Everyone wanted Robert's final word on a point of contention, or clarification of his manual. Though Robert's duties as an engineer kept him extremely busy, he took these requests seriously and always tried to find time to reply. This involved up to thirty letters a week for nearly fifty years. Even when overwork threatened his health in 1890-1891, he made sure that responses to inquiries were sent. Most of the issues were not that critical. Robert tried to assure his correspondents that they and their organizations were perfectly free to adapt his rules to their peculiar situations. Most issues could be resolved with patience, kindness and common sense. Eventually, he stopped repeating these points and tried to focus on the questions at hand. Robert retained the letters, however, and the information exchanged later proved useful.

¹⁶ Doyle discusses this extensively in "Rules of Order," see pp. 5-6.

He drew on the correspondence as source material when he wrote his last works,

Parliamentary Practice (1921) and *Parliamentary Law* (1923).¹⁷

S. C. Griggs and Company congratulated Robert that his book had "done wonders." Robert's success, however, caused a conflict of interest between author and publisher. Now that the Chicago firm had such a successful book, the company vigilantly guarded its rights as publisher. Henry Robert wanted the additional income from *Rules of Order*, and he did not want to see his work stolen from him, but Robert had written *Rules of Order* with an eye to reform and he had no initial reservations about sharing his ideas and rules with anyone who asked. Unfamiliar with the function of copyright regulations of the day, Robert was pleased to receive invitations to write articles on parliamentary law for encyclopedias and compendiums, or to allow verbatim quotes from *Rules of Order*. Robert correctly felt such exposure would more quickly win devotees for his new system. Unfortunately, as the Griggs company informed him, it also cleared the way for

¹⁷ Sarah Corbin Robert, "Information Sheet for the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of Robert's *Rules of Order*," HMR Papers, reel 7, Corinne Robert, Washington, D.C., to Ben Skinner, n.p., 12 November 1890, HMR Papers, reel 5; [Illegible], Office of the Attending Surgeon, United States Army, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., 13 October 1891, HMR Papers, reel 2; see correspondence in HMR Papers, reels 1, 5, 7, etc., especially Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to A. H. Ray, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 20 March 1894, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, Dayton, Ohio, to Mrs. Boyd, n.p., 22 May 1915, HMR SCL 9547; Henry Martyn Robert, *Parliamentary Practice: An Introduction to Parliamentary Law* (New York: The Century Company, 1921; reprint, with a Foreword by Henry Martyn Robert III and a Preface by Mrs. G. Frederick Norman, Bicentennial Edition, Lexington, MA: Lewis Publishing Company, Inc., 1975); Henry Martyn Robert, *Parliamentary Law* (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, Inc., 1923), contains many of the letters collected by Robert. Robert's papers reflect a refusal to accept limits on his ability to perform every task sent his way. The heavy work load he carried tended to bring on exhaustion, neurasthenia, and perhaps re-occurrences of malaria. He finally learned to take care of his health, a point he tried to pass on to his son. See Henry Martyn Robert, Steamship *Camal* off Key West, to Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., Haworth, New Jersey, 11 April 1900, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., n.p., 8 November 1900, HMR Papers, reel 2.

unauthorized use of his work. This could lead to other companies demonstrating a right to publish *Rules of Order* without the permission of either the author or publisher and keep the proceeds to themselves. Robert's publishers also argued that it could dilute the market and cut overall income.¹⁸

S. C. Griggs and Company insisted that Robert clear all requests with them in advance and kept a watchful eye on their well-meaning writer. As S. C. Griggs, Jr. warned him in 1880, there was, "a set of harpies always trying to steal the hard earnings of others," and the company had to be diligent in stopping the theft of their copyright. If any other publisher successfully printed the "substance" of Robert's rules, the protection of copyright law would be lost. "Now we are not so great philanthropists," Griggs concluded, "as to work hard for years, spending more money than we got, just to build up something for others who haven't earned it and we most emphatically refuse to give any man permission to take matter from our book to use in another book that will lessen the sale of ours (as so intended!)." All use of Robert's work had to be carefully controlled. Robert had no right to take any action injurious to the company. Any loss of control

¹⁸ Quote from [Illegible, for S. C. Griggs and Company], Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 13 January 1877. There are a number of letters in HMR Papers, reels 1, 2 and 5, dealing with plagiarism and copyright infringement. Griggs and Company agreed to let Robert write articles for such books as Appleton's *Cyclopedia* (HMR Papers, reel 1), and *Johnson's Universal Cyclopedia* (HMR Papers, reel 5), but rejected any questionable offer. Each new book or article on parliamentary law was screened carefully for plagiarism. See S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 2 March 1880, HMR Papers, reel 1; S. C. Griggs, Jr., Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 16 October 1880, HMR Papers, reel 1; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 21 October 1880, HMR Papers, reel 1; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., November 1880, HMR Papers, reel 1; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 20 May 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; Contract and Facts of Publication of Robert's

would eventually hurt Robert as well. The Griggses finally convinced Robert of the wisdom of their policy. When Scott, Foresman and Company later allowed other companies to publish older editions of *Rules of Order*, Robert feared the new practice would create a loss of copyright protection and revenue. He unsuccessfully challenged the right of his new publisher to break with the arrangement established by S. C. Griggs.¹⁹

A more difficult problem involved Robert's efforts to bring the benefits of his parliamentary system to churches. He wanted an even simpler and inexpensive guide available to help bring order to church meetings. By 1877, Robert was ready to publish *The Parliamentary Guide*, condensed from *Rules of Order*. Helen Robert was largely responsible for the guide's content. The seventy-eight page paperback contained the organizational material from Part II of *Rules of Order* which she had inspired. Henry Robert added a table of basic rules on the handling of motions. Pastors, committee chairmen, and officers of religious and secular organizations could use the book as an even simpler and more affordable version of *Rules of Order*. Robert followed this up in 1878 with his *Register for Baptist Churches*, a standard form for recording and reporting church records prepared at the request of the Wisconsin state Baptist convention. Robert also provided an associational letter blank for the compilation of these records.

Rules of Order (1912), HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Anna E. Clark, Steven's Point, Wisconsin, 17 April 1895, HMR Papers, reel 5.

¹⁹ Quote from S. C. Griggs, Jr., Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 16 October 1880, HMR Papers, reel 1. Spelling and punctuation in original; Contract and Facts of Publication of Robert's Rules of Order (1912), HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Anna E. Clark, Steven's Point, Wisconsin, 17 April 1895, HMR Papers, reel 5.

Together, these forms could instantly provide information on a church for the last twenty years.²⁰

While S. C. Griggs and Company finally issued the *Parliamentary Guide* for Robert, the company was never pleased with the project. The publishers felt it would confuse the public and dilute sales of *Rules of Order*, which sold for twice the price. Griggs regarded *Rules of Order* reasonably priced and wanted to cement its place as "the standard source." Accordingly, the company paid Robert \$130 for thirteen hundred copies of the guide, which they distributed as quickly as possible. The bulk of the four thousand copies Robert had printed finally went to schools dedicated to training African-American ministers. The company resisted efforts by Robert to issue the guide or other less expensive versions of *Rules of Order*. In 1883, the company even asked Robert to revoke

²⁰ Note the table published in *The Parliamentary Guide* was also added to *Rules of Order*. Henry Martyn Robert, *The Parliamentary Guide* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1877, copy in HMR Papers, reel 7); Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to W. L. Klein, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 21 July 1897, HMR Papers, reel 5; [Illegible] Scott, for S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 18 February 1883, HMR Papers, reel 1; Cathcart, *Baptist Encyclopedia*, 992; *The Baptist Church Register* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Home Publishing Society, 1921, copy in HMR Papers, reel 3); Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to B. Griffith, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 14 June 1884, HMR Papers, reel 3; Report of Committee on Baptist Register, Wisconsin Baptist State Convention (1878), [Signed by Henry Martyn Robert, J. W. Griffith, and A. R. Medbury. Robert corresponded with both men, particularly with Medbury], HMR Papers, reel 6; Newspaper Clipping, 1878, HMR Papers, reel 7; Flyers for *Church Register*, HMR Papers, reel 6; Note on Profits and Expenses of *Church Letter* and *Associational Letter Blank*, HMR Papers, reel 1; L. R. Blackwell, [for the American Baptist Publication Society], Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 28 April 1877, HMR Papers, reel 1. Though the publisher complained that these church report forms would lose money, they were published in April 1878 (with Robert supplying the electroplates) and were still in publication in 1921.

circulation of a card-sized parliamentary guide published by the Women's Christian Temperance Publishing Association for the benefit of member chapters.²¹

Henry Robert finally had to give up on personally providing a guide tailored to the needs of churches. Instead, he became involved in the work of the Reverend Doctor T. W. Powell. Robert met Powell at the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Milwaukee. By the time Powell moved to Chicago, he had become a devotee of Robert's system and was committed to devising a parliamentary manual for Baptist churches based on it. He persuaded Robert to help by writing an introduction for the book and allowing Powell to incorporate an article originally written by Robert for Tabernacle Baptist. Robert also provided editorial input and advised Powell on locating a publisher. The collaborators had largely prepared a text in the summer of 1885, but Powell did not complete a deal with the Revell Company in Chicago to publish his *Church Order* until the summer of 1888. By September, Powell was able to send Robert eight copies. The book sold for a quarter, of which five cents went to the author. Powell was enthusiastic about the opportunity to bring Robert's parliamentary method to churches as a means of ending dissension and strife. He had tried to make the final version more ecumenical, though it was still primarily adapted to Baptist interpretations of congregational polity. In 1897,

²¹ Quote from [Illegible] Scott, for S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 18 February 1885, HMR Papers, reel 1. Emphasis in original, [Illegible, for S. C. Griggs and Company], Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 2 April 1877, HMR Papers, reel 1; Receipt of Sale of *Parliamentary Guide* to S. C. Griggs, 3 May 1877, HMR Papers, reel 7; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 8 March 1880, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 24 November 1896, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Anna E. Clark, Steven's Point, Wisconsin, 17 April 1895, HMR Papers, reel 5.

Robert still recommended Powell's manual as a parliamentary guide for churches, as he "has explained the subject I think very well."²²

Despite the best efforts of S. C. Griggs and Company to protect and promote *Rules of Order*, the company found it difficult to make a profit. Costs of production and publicity cut into the company's revenues. This partially explains the company's efforts to tightly control circulation. The company also sought to improve *Rules of Order* with each printing. Since the plates used in production of the text frequently wore out, the text could be edited on a regular basis. Each printing gave Henry Robert an opportunity to improve his manual. By the late 1880s, S. C. Griggs and Company began pressing Robert to edit the first major revision of the basic text. His duties as an engineer precluded this for some time, but Robert finally set to work on a new edition. This was published in 1893. Though no edition of *Rules of Order* would carry the official designation *revised* until the edition of 1915, the twenty pages added to the 1893 edition made it sufficiently different as to require a new copyright.²³

²² Quote from Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to W. L. Klein, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 21 July 1897, HMR Papers, reel 5. Punctuation in original: T. W. Powell, Hyde Park, [Chicago], Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 27 June 1885, HMR Papers, reel 1; T. W. Powell, Hyde Park, [Chicago], Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1 December 1886, HMR Papers, reel 1; T. W. Powell, Hyde Park, [Chicago], Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 5 July 1888, HMR Papers, reel 2; T. W. Powell, Hyde Park, [Chicago], Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 30 July 1888, HMR Papers, reel 2; T. W. Powell, Hyde Park, [Chicago], Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 25 September 1888, HMR Papers, reel 2; Thomas Kingsford, Oswego, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 26 November 1888, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to [T. W.] Powell, n.p., 1 July 1889, HMR Papers, reel 3.

²³ [Illegible] Scott, for S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 18 February 1883, HMR Papers, reel 1; Contract and Facts of Publication of Robert's Rules of Order (1912), HMR Papers, reel 6;

If S. C. Griggs and Company expected the new edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* to generate large revenues, they were disappointed. The serious depression which occurred in 1893 cut sales drastically. S. C. Griggs soon had trouble making Robert's royalty payments on time. This aggravated Robert's efforts to deal with the financial concerns of his extended family, especially with his anticipated retirement from the army at the end of the decade. By 1896, the Griggs company found it impossible to remain in business. Its concerns were taken over by Scott, Foresman and Company, which retained the older firm's offices. The new publishers had to be happy to have *Rules of Order* among their publications. As Henry Robert pointed out in August 1897, revenues from the book had increased by 50 percent in the last seven years over those of the previous seven years. Robert felt that it proved that a manual of this type only improved in sales once it became the standard authority in its field.²⁴

Statements and Receipts of *Rules of Order*, S. C. Griggs Company, HMR SCL 9547; Statements and Receipts of *Rules of Order*, S. C. Griggs Company, HMR Papers, reel 7; S. C. Griggs, [Jr.?], Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 16 September 1884, HMR Papers, reel 1; [Illegible] Field [for S. C. Griggs and Company], Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 4 December 1885, S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., 7 May 1890, HMR Papers, reel 2; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, 17 December 1892, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1893). For a reprint, see Henry Martyn Robert, *Robert's Rules of Order* ([Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1893]; reprint, with an Introduction by Floyd M. Riddick and a Guide and Commentary by Rachel Vixman, Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, Spire Books, 1967).

²⁴ Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 50-51; [Illegible] Scott, for S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 18 February 1883, HMR Papers, reel 1; Contract and Facts of Publication of Robert's *Rules of Order* (1912), HMR Papers, reel 6; Statements and Receipts of *Rules of Order*, S. C. Griggs Company, HMR SCL 9547; Statements and Receipts of *Rules of Order*, S. C. Griggs Company, HMR Papers, reel 7; S. C. Griggs, Jr., Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 30 December 1886, HMR Papers, reel 1; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, 18 May 1893, HMR Papers, reel 2; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago,

The new publisher's did press Robert to undertake a truly revised edition of *Rules of Order*. He disagreed with them. Robert argued that he did not have time to write a major revision and insisted that one was not needed then anyway. He had intentionally left the 1893 revision as much like the older version as possible. Cushing's manual, Robert argued, had served as an unaltered authority for forty-six years before he supplanted it. This meant continuity of procedure for organizations using the manual. Robert wanted the same continuity to apply to his own rules of order. He did not wish to confuse the public or overstress the market. Robert continued to resist the company's efforts until he was ready to publish *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* in 1915.²⁵

Whatever frustrations the company felt over Robert's arguments were worth the profits his work yielded. The cover of the ninth edition (1990) proudly proclaims nearly four-and-one-half million copies in print. *Robert's Rules of Order* remains the standard manual of parliamentary procedure around the world. Scott Foresman, now a division of HarperCollins and primarily responsible for textbooks and reference materials, controls publication with Henry Robert's descendants. Amazingly, Henry Robert established his authority as a parliamentarian as a secondary interest. He was a military engineer first

Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, 27 June 1893, HMR Papers, reel 2; S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 11 January 1895, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to S. C. Griggs and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 4 February 1896, HMR Papers, reel 5; Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 19 April 1897, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Mr. Holbrook, n.p., 31 August 1897, HMR Papers, reel 2.

²⁵ Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 24 November 1896, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, *Robert's Rules of Order Revised for Deliberative Assemblies* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1915).

and a parliamentarian second. Robert diverted as much time as he could to his career in parliamentary law. He answered letters, revised *Rules of Order*, and taught classes on parliamentary law and procedure. Still, this interest remained an avocation until the last few years of his life. From 1915 to 1923, when he was concerned with passing on a legacy to his family, Robert concentrated his energies on parliamentary law. Until then, he devoted only as much time to it as he had to spare. This benefited Joe Robert. With Henry's blessing, Joe turned teaching and writing about parliamentary law into a career. He taught parliamentary law at chatauquas and other training opportunities and published his own parliamentary guides and manuals. Henry heartily supported his brother's efforts. For the time being, Henry Robert had too many other concerns to actively perform these services himself.²⁶

²⁶ Back cover, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 9th ed.; Joseph Thomas Robert, Jr., Draft of Parliamentary Problems Made Plain (14 October 1898), HMR Papers, reel 5; Notations on Joseph Thomas Robert, Jr., *Robert's Primer of Parliamentary Law for Schools, Colleges, Clubs, Fraternities, Etc.* (New York: Doubleday and McClure Company, 1900) in HMR SCL 1651; Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 52-56; Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, to Julia B. Shattuck, Chicago, Illinois, 7 October 1892, HMR Papers, Reel 2; Joe Robert, Grinnell, Iowa, to "Dear Old Fellow," n.p., 26 December 1893, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Mrs. J. M. Thorndike, Austin, Illinois, 9 July 1900, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Professor Judson, Chicago University, Chicago, Illinois, 25 January 1899, HMR Papers, reel 5; Thais M. Plaisted, "General Henry M. Robert: Parliamentarian," *The Social Studies* 48.5 (May 1957): 161.

CHAPTER SIX

FAITH AND MORAL REFORM

The work of Henry Martyn Robert has been called a catalyst for the coming Progressive movement since it provided an organizational framework for the various reform organizations which coalesced to form that movement in the early twentieth century. Progressivism was a broad-based movement which encouraged the growth of governmental regulation, and democratic and social reform but with no single agenda. It has been observed, in fact, that Progressivism was a loose “conglomeration of movements” joined primarily by a common outlook. It was, however, far from unified as to specific goals and methods. Some Progressives, such as Washington Gladden or Walter Rauschenbusch of the Social Gospel movement, addressed reform from a religious context. Other Progressives, such as politician Robert M. LaFollette, philosopher-educator John Dewey, or engineer Frederick W. Taylor, addressed reform from other perspectives altogether. Progressives generally stressed concepts of morality, order, efficiency and professionalism. They also tended to view problems and solutions nationally, not just locally. All sought to improve American society.¹

¹ Quote from Arthur S. Link, William A. Link, William B. Catton, *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since 1900*, Vol. 1, *An Era of Economic and Social Change, Reform, and World Wars 1900-1945*, 6th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf,

Henry Robert's life and writings reflected Progressive values. This did not arise, however, from a personal commitment to an overall reform agenda but from Robert's own character as an officer, engineer and evangelical Christian. Robert's own efforts at social reform arose largely from his religious convictions and cannot be considered apart from them. Indeed, Robert's best-known quote, "Where there is no law, but every man does what is right in his own eyes, there is the least of real liberty," is itself an allusion to a biblical text. In his personal life, Robert's social reform activities were shaped primarily by his Christian beliefs.²

Robert makes his sentiments plain in a sermon on Sunday schools and moral reform which he delivered in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on 14 December 1876. Secular education, he argued, could never accomplish the moral reformation of any nation. Instead, in its "highest development [it] has usually just preceded the nation's fall." Better citizens, Robert noted, were produced by religious education, not secular. Robert continued to explain that purely secular reform efforts could not succeed. Secular moral reform

1987), 44-47, 51-53, 55-57, 61-63; Doyle deals with Robert's work as a catalyst for Progressivism and the relationship of Progressive ideals to Robert's character in "Rules of Order," 6-12, 17-18; Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 30; R. Frank Saunders, Jr., "Henry Martyn Robert: Engineer and Parliamentarian, 1837-1923," *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina* 99 (1994): 22-30 (manuscript copy): 1, 3-4. For a general discussion on religious idealism and Progressive reform, see Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920*, with a Foreword by David Donald, Making of America Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967) and Martin E. Marty, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land: 500 Years of Religion in America* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, Inc., 1984, reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 337-371. Recent general studies on Progressivism include Eldon J. Eisenach, *The Lost Promise of Progressivism* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994) and Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997).

² Quote from Henry Martyn Robert, Preface to *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order* (1876), 4, HMR Papers, Reel 7. The quote is an allusion to Judges 21:25; Doyle, "Rules of Order," 6-12, 17-18; Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 30; Saunders, "Henry Martyn Robert," 1, 3-4.

societies could encourage citizens to halt self-destructive behavior, he noted, but only Christian evangelism created the inner change which empowered individuals to accomplish successful reform. The plethora of reform causes, Robert felt, confused Christians and led to wasted effort. Instead of attempting to do many things poorly, Christians should focus on pursuing one or two effective causes well.³

Robert believed Christians should not back down in the face of opposition to a moral stance. At a time when his own life was complicated by controversy over a moral cause, Robert made this the main theme of a dedication sermon delivered to Grace Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., on 7 June 1891. Christians had to resist the urge to conform to the society around them, Robert argued, remaining true to traditional tenets of the faith concerning morality. This non-conformity and commitment to morality should be reflected in the churches. "That will give you true success," Robert noted, "though you may not have members, popularity, or wealth. You want a church such that membership in it means something." If the churches remained faithful, he said, God would honor their commitment. In a report written in 1895, Robert also noted that the normal condition of a church was to be active, aggressive and progressive in its efforts. To be otherwise meant stagnation, spiritual decay, and death.⁴

³ Henry Martyn Robert, *Sermon on Sunday Schools and Moral Reform*, Delivered in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 14 December 1876, HMR Papers, reel 6.

⁴ Quote from Henry Martyn Robert, *Dedication Sermon at Grace Baptist Church*, Washington, D.C., 7 June 1891, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, *Draft Copy of Annual Report of Advisory Committee*, West Baptist Church, Oswego, New York, 5 May 1895, HMR Papers, reel 3.

In February 1890, Robert was surprised when he was detailed as the engineer commissioner for the District of Columbia. At the time, a three-man commission administered the district. Two commissioners were civilians, in this case John Watkins Douglass, who served as president of the board, and Lemon Galpin Hine. The third was to be appointed from the Corps of Engineers to oversee matters relative to engineering projects. These included roads and bridges, railroads, steam engines, gas systems, water and sewerage, parking, communications, surveying, and the waterfront. Robert, however, did not confine himself to his own areas of expertise. Having been associated with temperance organizations and missions to prostitutes in other cities, Robert now pursued reform in these areas in his role as a civil administrator. With these interests came an attendant effort to reform the notoriously corrupt Metropolitan Police force. His efforts aroused violent protest from saloonkeepers and police officers, and provoked a series of editorials in *The Washington Post* that questioned the legitimacy of an army officer exercising civil authority. His actions also led to friction with Commissioner Hine, who felt that Robert had unfairly infringed on his own responsibilities. This friction was exacerbated by Robert's efforts to keep his military assistants, Captain William Trent Russell and a Captain Luck, from being made generally available to serve the commission. He felt that army officers could not be placed under civilian control without their consent—a concession which Robert boldly asserted his assistants would not give. Oddly enough, Robert's active meddling stands in contrast to a statement he made in 1889 that army officers should stand aloof from partisan politics. Placed in this

situation without consultation, Robert acted in what he regarded as the best interests of the citizens of Washington, D.C.⁵

In pressing his reforms, Robert stressed enforcement of codes concerning liquor licenses, the elimination of streetwalking, and the charging of police officers who were deemed guilty of criminal or immoral behavior. In Robert's approach, the police became the agents of moral reform in the community by strictly monitoring the moral character of any person granted a liquor license. The police were to keep a close surveillance on saloons to halt gambling, rowdy or violent activity, and prostitution. Robert wanted the number of licenses restricted by these measures and any proprietor who abused liquor privileges was to be swiftly punished. The control of the liquor traffic was closely related to the control of prostitution, with the two vices confined to separate establishments. Robert wanted streetwalking eliminated. Prostitution should be restricted to a limited number of known brothels whose activity could be regulated by the police. Robert did not, however, favor full prohibition or the complete elimination of

⁵ Extract, Special Order No. 27, Office of the Adjutant General, United States Army, Washington, D.C., Redfield Proctor, [Secretary of War], Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1 February 1890, HMR Papers, reel 4; Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., to John P. Fitch, Washington, D.C., 19 February 1890, HMR Papers, reel 3; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; A. Mackall, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., 10 August 1891, HMR Papers, reel 2; Lemon G. Hine, Report to the Office of Commissioners for the District of Columbia, HMR Papers, reel 2; Editorials, *The Washington Post*, 1-8 July 1890; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to "My Dear Ernest," n.p., 28 December 1889, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to A. Mackenzie, Washington, D.C., 19 June 1896, HMR Papers, reel 4. Robert also had a civilian assistant named Kirk. During this period, Robert also served as a member of the Rock Creek Park Commission. The people of Washington, D.C., were not the only ones criticizing Robert for his character and activity. An officer in San Francisco wrote him expressing his hopes that Robert would learn to behave himself with the dignity due the office, and drop his "jocoseness," which had no place in the proper demeanor of a colonel in the Corps of Engineers. [Illegible], San Francisco, California, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 6 February 1890, HMR Papers, reel 2.

prostitution. He regarded this as an impracticable solution. Instead, he sought to monitor and control such activities according to approved patterns. This he considered the most efficient and practical approach. Robert's approach reflected his military background and a certain naiveté concerning civilian methods of administration.⁶

The limited nature of Robert's agenda was consistent with his religious beliefs. Robert felt that civil means of control were legitimate to the protection of citizens from harm. He did not, however, believe that secular reform methods could produce permanent moral reform and did not expect them to do so. They could control but not eliminate destructive or immoral habits. When individuals lacked the inner commitment to sustain reform, then reform failed. The only force capable of creating true and permanent moral change, Robert felt, was the power of religious conversion. It was the responsibility of the Christian Church to carry forward the cause of moral reform, since only the Church made available the true power of change and reform. Churches were never meant to be religious societies alone, but active agents of salvation. Christians, therefore, were to hold themselves to a higher standard of moral behavior, and were to work diligently to make faith, the basis of that behavior, available to those around them. Then true moral reform would be possible. Empowered by God, faithful Christians could accomplish any task. "There is no such word as 'fail,'" he asserted, "in the vocabulary of the truly consecrated child of God."⁷

⁶ Henry Martyn Robert, Speech to Police Lieutenants, 20 May 1890, HMR Papers, reel 2.

⁷ Quote from Henry Martyn Robert, Dedication Sermon at Grace Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., 7 June 1891, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Sermon on Sunday Schools and Moral Reform, Delivered in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 14 December

As engineer commissioner, Robert's actions produced friction and stress. His inspection of the Globe Theatre and the commissioners' subsequent suspension of the theatre's liquor license incited a controversy that ultimately came before the United States Supreme Court on a request for a writ of mandamus by the theatre's owners. The high court concluded that the commissioners had done their duty in accordance with the law, and denied the writ, but the controversy hardly abated. In October 1890, Lemon Hine resigned in protest and was replaced by a more sympathetic John Wesley Ross. The cumulative strain, however, began to wear on Henry Robert. He became sick and could not keep pace with his responsibilities. Robert even delegated the task of parliamentary correspondence to his daughter Corinne. On 13 October 1891, the attending army surgeon in Washington, D.C., informed Robert that he was suffering from neurasthenia caused by stress and over-work and ordered a change of duty. Robert accordingly left the board of commissioners and was replaced by Captain Russell. Thereafter, Ross and Russell continued a more subdued effort to control the saloons, but Commissioner Douglass finally forced Russell to focus his energies on his duties as engineer commissioner.⁸

1876, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Draft Copy of Annual Report of Advisory Committee, West Baptist Church, Oswego, New York, 5 May 1895, HMR Papers, reel 3, Clipping from *The Congregationalist*, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 6; Undated Sermon, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, The Comparative Importance of State Missions, 1886, HMR Papers, reel 6. This speech was delivered to the Pennsylvania Baptist State Convention in 1886 and subsequently published by the convention.

⁸ Undated Copy of Supreme Court Decision, *The United States, on Relation of Horace G. Roop and Charles Nopper v. John W. Douglass, Lemon G. Hine, and Henry M. Robert, Commissioners of the District of Columbia*, (n.d.), HMR Papers, reel 6; Office of the Attending Surgeon, United States Army, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., 13 October 1891, HMR Papers, reel 2; Corinne Robert, Washington, D.C., to Ben Skinner, n.p., 12 November 1891, HMR Papers, reel 5; S. J. Black,

Henry Robert diligently applied his ideals both as army officer and as a member of Baptist churches wherever he was posted. Robert took great pride in noting that by his retirement he had presided over more boards and commissions than any other army officer. He used persuasion and compromise, not force, to obtain unanimous votes in all major decisions of these boards and commissions. To promote efficiency and harmony in churches, Robert urged them to adopt his *Rules of Order* and related materials. He also promoted the writing of improved church constitutions and the adoption of church advisory councils to enforce church covenants and to monitor the behavior of members. Robert felt that the behavior of Christians and their churches should strictly follow biblical teachings. He edited *Robert's Rules of Order* specifically to discuss a United States Supreme Court case that legitimized disciplinary action by churches and ecclesiastical tribunals.⁹

Robert's concern for church discipline and his active role as a trustee and deacon occasionally brought him into conflict with recalcitrant members. In September 1889, a particularly troublesome incident occurred at the Berean Baptist Church, Philadelphia. Henry Robert served as president of the board of trustees and helped write a new

Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 6 February 1892, HMR Papers, reel 2; Moncure Burke, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 4 January 1893, HMR Papers, reel 2.

⁹ Henry Martyn Robert, *The Need for Rules of Order in Baptist Churches*, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to W. L. Klein, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 21 July 1890, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., to H. T. Lucas, Howard, Pennsylvania, 31 March 1891, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to the Honorable Charles Kinney [Secretary of State for Ohio], Columbus, Ohio, 27 September 1897, HMR Papers, reel 5; Henry Martyn Robert, Dayton, Ohio, to Mrs. Boyd, n.p., 22 May 1915, HMR SCL 9547; Jadwin, "Henry Martyn Robert," 3; Joseph F. O'Brien, "Henry M. Robert as a Presiding Officer," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 42 (April 1956): 157-

constitution for the church. A member named Murphy was habitually disagreeable. At a church meeting on 16 September 1889, Murphy so abused the presiding officer that disciplinary action seemed necessary and a petition was placed before the advisory council. The petition indicated Robert's influence in the church. The ten men who signed the original petition included Henry Martyn Robert, Sr., as president of the board of trustees; his friend, Reverend A. R. Medbury, as a deacon; Henry Robert, Jr.; and Luigi D'Auria, who married Helen Robert, Jr. In accordance with church by-laws, a delegation of deacons visited Brother Murphy to effect reconciliation. When Murphy refused to admit he had done any wrong, he was brought before the church advisory council. When Murphy adamantly refused to cooperate with the proceedings, the council recommended that he be censured for "disorderly walk," a church term for disruptive behavior. Murphy was defended in the affair by a former pastor of the church, Dr. Edgar M. Levy. Church officers finally dismissed Levy from membership.¹⁰

Robert's principles had earlier brought him into conflict with a fellow trustee named Katz at the Second Baptist Church, Germantown, Pennsylvania. Katz resented Robert's insistence that he should tithe. Katz also took comments made by Robert at a prayer meeting as intentional insults aimed at Katz and his wife. On Sunday, 13 June 1886, the

162. This last is notable for its access to diaries and journals not placed in the Library of Congress. The family normally has not made these documents available.

¹⁰ Charter, Constitution, and By-Laws of Berean Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. HMR Papers, reel 5. Report of the Advisory Committee of Berean Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 30 September 1889, HMR Papers, reel 5; Officers of Berean Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Edgar M. Levy, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 21 November 1889, HMR Papers, reel 5; Memorandum Book of Berean Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, HMR Papers, reel 1. A. R. Medbury maintained very close ties to the Robert family.

church celebrated the Lord's Supper. Biblical teachings warned against making offerings or participating in the Lord's Supper without first reconciling differences with neighbors. Knowing of the Katzes' displeasure, Robert responded to these injunctions by attempting reconciliation with them according to the pattern prescribed by the New Testament. Robert first went to their house on Saturday, 12 June, but no one was home. With the dispute unresolved, Robert then approached the Katzes after church the next day, but they refused to discuss the matter. Bothered, Robert next appealed to the pastor and a fellow trustee to mediate the disagreement as called for in the Bible. The men persuaded Robert to let the matter go for a month. The Roberts finally moved their membership. Robert rigidly tried to direct his personal behavior in accordance with the Bible. He expected others to do likewise.¹¹

A similar problem for Henry Robert arose in Milwaukee that involved a young minister named Allan Carr. On 27 September 1880, Robert hosted a meeting at his offices in Milwaukee to determine the legitimacy of Carr's ministerial credentials and his moral status. During the meeting and subsequent investigation, the panel determined that Carr had no proof of baptism or ordination and had falsified information concerning his education. He was "divorced" from his wife because his father-in-law had said it was all right. Carr had been dismissed from a church in Moline, Illinois, due to habitually frequenting bars and brothels and committing adultery. Carr was forced to leave Milwaukee, but Robert continued to receive inquiries concerning his behavior. In 1884,

¹¹ Henry Martyn Robert, Account of Dispute with Brother Katz, HMR Papers, reel 1.

Helen Robert finally insisted that her husband have nothing whatsoever to do with the impious minister and his continued transgressions.¹²

Based on his religious sentiments, Robert worked very hard to promote Christian missions and the growth of Sunday schools in the Baptist churches he and his family joined. Robert discussed his concept of Christian missions in an address to the Pennsylvania Baptist State Convention in 1886 on the importance of state missions. He felt that churches could not be successful without active compliance to Jesus' missionary injunctions, which commissioned the Church to spread the Gospel locally, regionally, and worldwide. Churches needed to devote time, leadership and money to all facets of missions: local, state, domestic and foreign missions; ministerial education; and the publication of Bibles and religious materials. Robert believed that no church could achieve true success without actively promoting missionary evangelism. Therefore, the immediate needs of a church should not be allowed to stint its missionary commitments. The Christian Church could fulfill its goal of evangelizing the world, he felt, only by the cooperative and efficient pooling of resources.¹³

Henry and Helen Robert's personal commitment to missions did have its limits, as illustrated in a letter of thanks to Reverend J. N. Murdock in 1889. According to Henry

¹² The make-up of the panel in Milwaukee indicates Robert's influence. It included Henry Robert, Rev. R. E. Manning, a layman named Mansfield, and Robert's friends Rev. T. W. Powell and Rev. A. R. Medbury. Henry Martyn Robert, *Account of Meeting With Allan Carr With Addended Notes*, 27 September 1880, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Rev. S. A. Hagler, Dallas, Texas, 19 February 1884, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Rev. S. Cornelius, Little Rock, Arkansas, [Illegible] 1884, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, *Postscript on a Receipt, Taken From Letter Book*, 4 April 1884, HMR Papers, reel 3.

Robert's letter, Helen, Sr., Helen, Jr., and Corinne had worked very hard to start basic mission work at Second Baptist, Germantown, and Berean Baptist, Philadelphia. Then, during the summer of 1889, Corinne agreed to marry a young man named Hyde and to go with him to Africa as a foreign missionary. Her parents moved swiftly to disabuse her of this idea. Reverend Murdock helped pressure Corinne to reconsider. In his letter, Henry Robert commended his daughter's commitment to missions, but characterized this decision as an impulse of pure emotion which would fade, leaving her stranded in Africa. He noted how hard she and her mother and sister had worked to start missions in the Philadelphia area, where they had overcome great indifference if not outright opposition. This, he felt, was her true gift and she would be of much more use to God at home than abroad. She was enthusiastic, a good teacher, an excellent pianist, and healthy, free of "the normal female complaints." Nevertheless, "she does not take to housekeeping at all," and in teaching "ignorant Africans" she would no doubt be out of her depth. Besides, her musical skills would be wasted in Africa. Under pressure, Corinne finally yielded. Instead of going to Africa with Missionary Hyde, she later married a naval officer, DeWitt Clinton Redgrave, and lived in Baltimore, Maryland.¹⁴

¹³ Henry Martyn Robert, *The Comparative Importance of State Missions*, 1886, HMR Papers, reel 6.

¹⁴ Quotes from Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to J. N. Murdock, n.p., 20 August 1889, HMR Papers, reel 3. Robert does not specify what missions his wife and daughters helped establish. In other cities, the Roberts had assisted with missions to prostitutes and Chinese, Sunday schools, YMCA's, and temperance societies. The Robert children had a strong connection to the United States Navy. Corinne's son, DeWitt Clinton Redgrave, Jr., served in the Navy, and her daughter, Priscilla, married a naval officer. Portia Robert also married a naval officer, Clarence Vernon Fowler, who taught languages at the Naval Academy. Her daughter, Corinna, married a naval officer. Henry Robert, Jr., taught mathematics at Annapolis. See Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 260-261.

Henry Robert most actively supported the cause of mission Sunday schools. He believed them to be one of the most vital of church programs, equal to worship services and prayer meetings. His experiences from San Francisco to Philadelphia demonstrated how an active education program could benefit an entire congregational ministry. To this end, each church should foster an efficient and well-funded Sunday school system. The first goal of the Sunday school, he felt, was the conversion of non-believers. The training of Christians in biblical knowledge came next, followed by training in Christian benevolence. Robert felt that all Sunday schools should devote a percentage of the offerings received to mission work. To these ends, Robert argued that all teachers should be confessing Christians, well versed in the teachings and doctrines they sought to impart, and active in the business of the church. As a Baptist, he also tried to obtain Baptist teachers first and accorded a priority in the disbursement of mission offerings to Baptist causes. Robert felt that an elected superintendent supported by a church committee or independent committee capable of writing and enforcing reasonable rules and procedures should administer the affairs of the Sunday school. In a properly run Sunday school, the churches could achieve the goal of moral reform through the winning of souls.¹⁵

¹⁵ Henry Martyn Robert, *The Comparative Importance of State Missions*, 1886, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, *Statement of the Principles That Should Guide Our Church in the Management of the Sunday School*, 26 February 1884, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, New Bedford, Massachusetts, to the Board of Directors of the Sabbath School of the William Street Church, [First Baptist Church, New Bedford], 7 October 1862, reprinted in Pillsbury, *First Baptist Church of New Bedford*, 34. A Sunday school superintendent or director functions as the principal supervising the school.

Robert was a diligent Sunday school teacher and superintendent. He insisted on strict discipline, which he felt was sadly lacking in public education. Robert made membership in his classes, normally of teen-aged boys, a mark of distinction. Nonetheless, reality often intruded on Robert's idealism and he recorded several humorous, if frustrating, examples of biblical ignorance displayed from pupils he felt should have known better. The examples mostly focus on students who could not remember from week to week what their lessons were about and a disinterest in studying their lessons at all. Coupled with a lack of historical sense and ignorance of geography, this could produce lamentable results. On one occasion, Robert substituted in Corinne's class of young men. None of the pupils could tell him the name of the city in which Jesus had been born. One brave soul finally volunteered that he thought it was in New Jersey. All agreed that the New Testament was much larger than the Old Testament. On another occasion, a young person expressed open disbelief that Robert could possibly have read through the entire Bible. Even Robert's own family was not totally immune. Robert recorded daughter Helen's confusion of "Blessed are the peacemakers," from the Sermon on the Mount, with "piecemakers." She thought Jesus had singled out dressmakers for his special blessing.¹⁶

All of these activities reflect Robert's belief that true reform of American society had to take place through the ministry, missions and education of evangelical Christian

¹⁶ Henry Martyn Robert, Note on Helen Robert, Jr., 1885, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, On Teaching Sunday School Classes, 18--, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, to T. Grenell, Detroit, Michigan, 23 June 1892, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Sunday School Anecdotes, 1886, HMR Papers, reel 1; Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 November 1941, HMR SCL 1651.

churches. This spirit combined well with the innate discipline and love of orderly efficiency which made Robert an effective engineer, officer, and teacher. From Robert's love of Christian missions, democratic expression, and discipline came *Robert's Rules of Order*. If his parliamentary system served as a catalyst for Progressivism, his ideological kinship to that movement came purely on his own terms.

CHAPTER SEVEN

OFFICER, ENGINEER AND FAMILY MAN

While Henry Robert established himself as an authoritative parliamentarian, his career as military engineer flourished, particularly in matters related to river and harbor improvements. In 1881, the United States Engineering Department published *The Water-Jet as an Aid to Engineering Construction*, a work prepared by officers under Robert's direction. The book served as an instructional aid for river and harbor improvements and underwater construction projects and drew heavily on Robert's work in the Great Lakes. Robert also edited two volumes of *Analytical and Topical Index to the Reports of the Chief of Engineers and the Officers of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, Upon Works and Surveys for River and Harbor Improvement, 1866-1892*. These writings helped establish Robert as an authority in these areas of engineering.¹

¹ United States Engineering Department, *The Water-Jet as an Aid to Engineering Construction*, prepared by L. Y. Schermerhorn under the direction of Henry Martyn Robert (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881); United States Engineering Department, *Analytical and Topical Index to the Reports of the Chief of Engineers and the Officers of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, Upon Works and Surveys for River and Harbor Improvement, 1866-1879* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1881); United States Engineering Department, *Analytical and Topical Index to the Reports of the Chief of Engineers and the Officers of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army, Upon Works and Surveys for River and Harbor Improvement, 1879-1887* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889); Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Public Printer,

In January 1883, Henry Robert was promoted to lieutenant colonel and in April 1883 he left Milwaukee for Oswego, New York, as the superintending engineer responsible for fortifications and river and harbor improvements on Lake Ontario and the Canadian border. In May 1885, he moved to Philadelphia as the superintending engineer for projects and fortifications for Philadelphia, the League Island Navy Yard, and Delaware Bay and its tributaries. He also served as supervising engineer for the Fourth Lighthouse District. While in Philadelphia, Robert worked diligently to improve the Delaware Breakwater and the Philadelphia waterfront.²

In 1889, Chief of Engineers Thomas L. Casey appointed Henry Robert as president of a board of commissioners to select a deep-water port in Texas. The other members of the board were Lieutenant-Colonel George Lewis Gillespie and Lieutenant-Colonel Jared A. Smith. The decision process involved intensive meetings and a trip to the Gulf of Mexico to examine the primary sites. Leading sites included Galveston, Corpus Christi, Rockport, the mouth of the Brazos River, Brazos Santiago, San Luis Pass, Sabine Pass, Aransas Pass, and Pass Caballo at Matagordo Bay. Major Oswald H. Ernst, the engineer in charge of the Galveston engineering office, warned Robert his board was “appointed to

Washington, D.C., 7 November 1889, HMR Papers, reel 4; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 3; Winfield S. Hancock, Governors Island, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., 4 March 1882, HMR Papers, reel 1; G. Weitzel, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Henry Martyn Robert, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 19 February 1883, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Petroski, “Henry Martyn Robert,” *American Scientist* 84:2 (March-April 1996): 107.

² Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 3; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; Henry Martyn Robert, Note on Change of Duties, 31 May 1883, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Inspection Book, 15 September [Illegible] to 2 September 1884, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, Description of Projects for 1885, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, Notes on Inspection of Delaware Breakwater, February 1885, HMR Papers, reel 1. The HMR Papers, reels 1 and 2 contain numerous notes, letters and miscellaneous information from Robert's time in Philadelphia

settle a dispute among a lot of howling land speculators." Ernst recommended that Robert and his fellow commissioners charter a steamer in New Orleans to visit the key sites and then stay in Galveston to fully digest what they had seen. Robert organized just such a trip, after which he requested that the other board members join him for a meeting in the New Orleans district office at ten o'clock on the morning of 6 May 1889.³

As they surveyed potential locations for the port, local politicians and promoters lobbied Robert, Gillespie and Smith with information concerning the relative merits of their favorite sites. Having examined the possible harbors, Robert adjourned the board. Each member would have time away from local influence during which to consider the matter. They reconvened in Philadelphia to make their final recommendations. Though the board acknowledged concern over the ability to keep the channels at Galveston free of sand, that port received the recommendation. Robert felt sure that rival promoters would conclude that the decision had been decided in favor of the faction with the deepest pockets, not harbor. Nevertheless, it was the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship between Henry Robert and the people of Galveston. By the end of the century, Robert had also helped design and implement the construction of a ship channel

³ Quote from Oswald H. Ernst, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 15 April 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Members of Deep Water Board, 20 April 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to W. L. Fish, New Orleans, Louisiana, 20 April 1889, HMR Papers, reel 4. The Caseys had successful careers after Robert's service with them on the frontier. Silas Casey published standard a manual of infantry tactics in 1862, supervised defenses of Washington, D.C., 1863-1865, and supervised examinations for officers commanding African-American troops. He retired in 1868. As chief of engineers from 1888, Thomas Lincoln Casey nearly completed construction of a new Library of Congress before his death. By the mid-1890s, Henry Martyn Robert ranked eighth in the Corps of Engineers, seven spots below Casey. Sifakis, *Who Was Who in the Civil War*, 111; Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*,

through Buffalo Bayou to connect Galveston with Houston. He also recommended important improvements to Aransas Pass, Texas; the Southwest Pass of the Mississippi River, Louisiana; and Pensacola, Florida. Robert's work was instrumental in bringing increased prosperity to the Gulf Coast, particularly to the Galveston-Houston region. In 1892, he served on a similar board that supervised harbor construction in San Pedro and Santa Monica, California.⁴

Robert's journey home from Galveston in 1889 proved eventful. His trip across Pennsylvania to Philadelphia was interrupted by the Johnstown Flood, 31 May 1889. After days of steady rain, the earthen dam that created Lake Conemaugh for the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club gave way. A wall of water roared westward down the

16, 559 (n.42-43); List of Officers and Retirement Dates, (date partially illegible; possibly 1894), HMR Papers, reel 1.

⁴ Lynn M. Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast: History of the United States Army Corps of Engineers at Galveston*, with a Foreword by Jon. C. Vanden Bosch (Galveston, TX: Galveston District, United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1977), 45-55, 100-106, 129-131; Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Chief of Engineers, Washington, D.C., 10 June 1889, 24 September 1889, 30 November 1889, 8 December 1889, HMR Papers, reel 4; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to "My Dear Ernest," n.p., 28 December 1889, HMR Papers, reel 3; Report of the Deep Water Board, December 1889, HMR Papers, reel 4; Henry Martyn Robert, Notes on Gulf Coast Survey Trip, HMR Papers, reels 1 and 2; Jno. A. Clarke, Rockport, Texas, to Board of U. S. Engineers, Henry Martyn Robert, Chairman, 29 April 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; M. W. Willett, Corpus Christi, Texas, to Members of the U. S. H[ar]b[or] Com[mission] Present, Corpus Christi, Texas, May 1884, HMR Papers, reel 1; Chas. Stewart, [Member of Congress for the First District of Texas], n.p., to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 3 May 1889; Angelo Barr, Galveston, Texas, to Board of U. S. Commissioners on Deep Water, Galveston, Texas, 10 May 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; W. C. Ballou, Rockport, Texas, to President, Board of U. S. Engineers, n.p., 2 May 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; John Wittey, San Antonio, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 25 May 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Notes on Buffalo Bayou Project and Southwest Pass Board, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to T. B. Wheeler, [Governor of Texas], Washington, D.C., 11 June 1899, HMR Papers, reel 6; Memorandum on Service of Henry Martyn Robert, HMR Papers, reel 7; Note Indicating Reputation of Henry Martyn Robert as "The Man Who Made Houston a Seaport" and "Father of Deep Water," HMR Papers, reel 7; Henry Martyn Robert, Notes on San Diego and San Pedro, HMR Papers, reel 1.

South Fork and Little Conemaugh Rivers to devastate Johnstown, a manufacturing town between Altoona and Pittsburgh. Robert's letters do not indicate specifically where his train was relative to the flood, but he was forced to live on the train for two days and then was confined for a week in Altoona, just east of the disaster.⁵

After Robert had recovered from the illness which led him to resign as engineer commissioner of the District of Columbia, he moved to Nashville, Tennessee, to oversee works on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers and their tributaries. He remained there from October 1891 to June 1893, when he moved to New York City as the superintending engineer for fortifications around New York City and improvements to the harbor and Long Island Sound. In the subsequent years before his retirement in 1901, Robert's responsibilities grew enormously. By October 1895, a request for an article on the United States Army as a career brought a negative response from Henry Robert. He was simply too busy to write it. He had been promoted to colonel in February and currently served as president of the board of engineers supervising all fortifications in the country. He was a member of both the Philadelphia and New York Harbor Line Boards, president of the board examining officers for promotion in the Corps of Engineers and president of the board of visitors for the engineering officers training facility at Willett's

⁵ Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Chief of Engineers, Washington, D.C., 10 June 1889, HMR Papers, reel 4; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to ?, n.p., 1 August 1889, HMR Papers, reel 3; T. W. Powell, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 5 July 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2; J. Samuels, Brooklyn, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 15 July 1889, HMR Papers, reel 2. For a history of the Johnstown Flood, see David McCullough, *The Johnstown Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968). McCullough also served as a consultant for a video history of the flood, "The American Experience: The Johnstown Flood," WGBH Educational Foundation, WNET/Thirteen and Guggenheim Productions, Inc., 1995.

Point, New York. He did all this in addition to serving as the supervising engineer for the Southwest Division, which reached from Pittsburgh to Galveston. This made Robert responsible for one fourth of all river and harbor projects east of the Rocky Mountains. By December, he had been made supervising engineer for the Northwest Division as well. His work with New York Harbor included extensive modifications to the main channel. By 1897, Robert also assisted with exercises and lectures at the Naval War College. When Scott, Foresman and Company approached him about a revision to *Robert's Rules of Order* in 1898, Robert refused, noting that his travel schedule alone left no time for such work. The outbreak of the Spanish-American War had increased the importance of his responsibilities for coastal defense. By his retirement, Robert had served on some fifty engineering boards, thirty-three as president, in addition to his regular duties.⁶

Overwork only added to stress from other areas in Robert's life. As he neared retirement, the necessity of adequate financial planning became increasingly important. Robert kept his wife and children on strict accounts. Receipts from *Robert's Rules of Order* generally ran just over nine hundred dollars a year, equal to one-fifth of Robert's military pay by 1897. The panic of 1893, which forced S. C. Griggs and Company out of

⁶ Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 3; Memorandum of Services, HMR Papers, reel 6; Memorandum of Services, HMR Papers, reel 7; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to J. S. Dickerson, Chicago, Illinois, 23 October 1895, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Notes From Inspection Tours, 1897, 1899, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, Lectures to the Naval War College on Modern Coastal Defenses, 1897, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Memorandum on Exercises of the Naval War College at Newport, Rhode Island, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 6; C. F. Goodrich, Newport, Rhode Island, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 12 March 1897, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Newport, Rhode Island, to John M. Wilson, Washington, D.C., 25 September 1900, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry

business, also cut back on the sales of Robert's manual. To further supplement his future income, Robert invested in stocks and business opportunities, including a company to manufacture a steam pump invented by Luigi D'Auria. He also joined siblings Mattie, Joe and James in real estate investments in Florida and Ohio.⁷

Financial stress created tension between Henry Robert and his brother, James. With a guaranteed income from the government, Henry's family expected him to make up their shortfalls. He had forgiven a twenty-five hundred dollar note to his father in 1868. When his father's and elder brother's income proved inadequate, Henry provided additional support. Even James, who married well, was a beneficiary earlier in his career. While James prospered, however, the care for Joseph, Joe and Mattie Robert had been shifted to Henry alone. Over time, Henry gave Joseph Thomas Robert over five thousand dollars, plus twenty-two hundred dollars to Joe from 1885 to 1887. When Helen complained, Henry finally let his younger brother know that he would no longer allow his wife and children to suffer when James could easily alleviate the burden. He warned his brother that if anything happened to him, the full burden would fall on James alone.

Henry proposed that James add two hundred dollars a month to Henry's one hundred in

Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, Illinois, 30 December 1898, HMR Papers, reel 5; Jadwin, "Henry Martyn Robert," 2.

⁷ Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Mr. Holbrook, n.p., 31 August 1897, HMR Papers, reel 2; Note from Henry Martyn Robert, [Sr.], to Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., n.p., n.d., Henry Martyn Robert Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to James A. Robert, Dayton, Ohio, 9 July 1887, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to Welter Gwynn, Sanford, Florida, 5 September 1887, HMR Papers, reel 3; Note on Stock and Florida Land Investments, 1886, HMR Papers, reel 1; Brazilian Patent Concession for Luigi D'Auria, 30 March 1894, HMR Papers, reel 7; Note on D'Auria Engines Used at Twenty Sites, 18--, HMR Papers, reel 1; Family Accounts, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, to James A. Robert, n.p., 30 January 1893, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to James A. Robert, Dayton, Ohio, 7 September 1891, HMR Papers, reel 3.

support of Joe and Mattie. In 1889, Robert was forced to call in a loan to a Dr. George Augustus Long in order to meet his own immediate obligations.⁸

James further strained the relationship with his brother by cheating Henry in real estate investments. James, needing capital, had persuaded Henry and Helen to invest in his land development in Dayton. They also gave James power-of-attorney to manage their lots. James, however, used their money to buy into rival properties, cheapening the value of Henry and Helen's lots and leaving them in arrears on their taxes and loan payments. A disappointed Henry canceled James' power-of-attorney over the property; Helen took on the task of trying to salvage their ownership with small payments on the balance owed. The three brothers had to work together to sell Mattie's Florida properties and settle her estate in January 1893, though Henry noted that James had not been responding to his latest letters and he was not even sure where Joe was. In 1895, Joe wrote that he and Hattie "would as soon think of inviting the Queen of Sheba as James and Agnes," though James had finally begun helping him financially. Joe felt that they ought perhaps to forward some of the money to Henry in recognition of his past support. Henry had not completely severed relations with his younger brother. He made a special effort to include visits with both brothers as part of a busy itinerary in 1899. Family bonds had been strained, but not broken.⁹

⁸ Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to James A. Robert, Dayton, Ohio, 8 May 1887, HMR Papers, reel 3; James A. Robert, Poughkeepsie, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 19 August 1867, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Dr. George Augustus Long, Washington, D.C., 26 July 1889, HMR Papers, reel 3.

⁹ Quote from Joe Robert, Angola, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 1 May 1895, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to James A. Robert, Dayton, Ohio, 7 September 1891, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to James A. Robert,

The Robert family finances also fueled Robert's desire to retire as a brigadier general and chief of engineers. Not only was this the highest honor his career could earn, but it would increase his retirement benefits. The desire to receive an actual commission as a brigadier was aggravated by Congress' consistent refusal to break tradition and advance army officers one grade at retirement, which was customary with naval officers. By 1900, the compensatory practice of promoting army officers shortly before retirement had also come under question. Early in the 1890s, Robert began watching the retirement lists, knowing that he had an excellent chance of ending his career as the commanding general of the Corps of Engineers a few months ahead of friend and fellow officer Colonel John M. Wilson. As Chief of Engineers William P. Craighill chose to retire slightly early in 1897, Craighill, Wilson and Robert expected Robert to succeed him in command of the Corps of Engineers. Then, Wilson would succeed Robert on his retirement in May 1901. Wilson would then retire in October. Their expectations were not fulfilled. The outgoing Cleveland administration chose to advance Wilson ahead of Robert. John Wilson was upset by this, but could hardly refuse, though he did protest the decision to President Grover Cleveland. Wilson wrote Henry Robert to thank him for his friendship and support in what had to be a painful experience for Robert. The two men continued to work closely together for the next four years.¹⁰

Dayton, Ohio, 16 December 1891, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Nashville, Tennessee, to James A. Robert, n.p., 30 January 1893, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to G. McC. Derby, New Orleans, Louisiana, [Illegible] 1899, HMR Papers, reel 6, Copy of Will of Mattie Robert, Dated 3 May 1887, HMR Papers, reel 3.

¹⁰ Note on Retirement Dates, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 1; Joseph Wheeler, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 8 July 1894, HMR Papers, reel 2; William P. Craighill, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 19 January 1897, HMR

As Wilson and Robert neared mandatory retirement in 1901, Wilson began to work for justice for his friend. He felt that what had been done to Henry Robert was wrong; he deserved to retire as a full brigadier in command of the corps. Wilson joined a drive to secure that command for Henry Martyn Robert. Letters and recommendations poured in to the McKinley administration and editorials were published in the newspapers. Henry Robert supplied a memorandum of his services for use in his defense. He felt that his services and seniority (he was five years senior to Wilson and six years to the next ranking officer) accorded him the honor. As the administration balked, Wilson made an extraordinary offer to retire early, so that Robert could serve as chief of engineers a few days before his retirement in May 1901. President William McKinley, unwilling to battle Congress on the issue or to open up additional debate concerning officers in similar situations, at first refused to accede to Wilson's offer. In the end, however, the president gave in to the public outcry and made the appropriate recommendations. Henry Martyn Robert became a brigadier general and chief of engineers on 30 April 1901. He retired on his birthday, 2 May 1901. George Lewis Gillespie, who had served with him on the Deep Water Board in 1889, succeeded Robert in command. Gillespie was appointed over two other officers senior to him in rank.¹¹

Papers, reel 2; John M. Wilson, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 3 February 1897, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, [Sr.], New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., n.p., 3 March 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2.

¹¹ Newspaper Clippings, HMR Papers, reel 7; Newspaper Clippings, HMR SCL 1651; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to the Adjutant General, United States Army, 1 May 1901, HMR Papers, reel 4; Henry Martyn Robert, [Sr.], New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., n.p., 3 March 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; Memorandum From John M. Wilson, 4 May 1901, HMR Papers, reel 4; Henry Martyn Robert, Memorandum of Services and Reasons for Appointment as Chief of Engineers, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 7; John Cassell, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 11

Helen Robert was not present to see her husband's success. On Thursday, 10 October 1895, Helen left the Robert home, "Miramar," at Arrochar, Staten Island, New York, to shop for items needed for a party the next evening. Feeling ill, she asked the foreman of some men working on a trolley line to drive her home. Corinne, the only family member at home, finally realized that her mother was experiencing heart failure and sent for a doctor. Within a half-hour, however, Helen had died, peacefully and without any real pain. The doctor arrived a half-hour after she had died. Henry Robert had sent a messenger over with a telegram from Henry, Jr., then attending Yale University. This messenger arrived only five minutes after Helen's death. At that time, however, Corinne was not sure that her mother had not simply lost consciousness and sent the man after her father with an urgent message to come home. Henry Robert arrived two hours later, just moments after youngest daughter Portia came home from school. Henry, Jr., arrived from New Haven, Connecticut, that evening. Henry Robert did not remarry for over five years. His retirement from the army coincided with his marriage to former schoolteacher Isabel Livingston Hoagland, on 8 May 1901, in Owego, New York. To marry the staunchly Baptist Henry Robert, she had been baptized in a private ceremony in March. Robert noted to Henry, Jr., that the wedding was his last

April 1901, HMR Papers, reel 1; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to "My Dear Nell," n.p., 16 April 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; A. D. Wilt, Dayton, Ohio, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 24 April 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; William P. Craighill, Charleston, West Virginia, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 25 April 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; John M. Wilson, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 24 April 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; G. T. Walker, New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, [1901], HMR Papers, reel 2; A. R. Medbury, Jenkinstown, [Illegible], to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 29 April 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2. To James Robert, William McKinley's policies on appointments were a sign of his character as "an ass."

opportunity to officially wear the full uniform of a colonel of engineers. After a honeymoon in Cuba, the couple settled down in Owego.¹²

Robert's earlier connection to Galveston, Texas, now brought an opportunity for work as a consulting engineer. Galveston had been devastated by a hurricane on 8 September 1900. Portions of the city were totally destroyed. Since the Corps of Engineers had undertaken extensive efforts to maintain Galveston as a port, Brigadier General Wilson wanted a full report on the damage to both Galveston and the ship jetties constructed by the corps at the mouth of the Brazos River. Since Galveston was in Henry Robert's Southwest Division, Robert served as chairman of the board Wilson appointed. The other members were Major Henry M. Adams, and Captains Charles S. Riché and Edgar Jadwin. The board ruled that the storm that hit Galveston in September was at least twice as destructive as the worst previously recorded hurricane in the area, and called the storm "one of the worst the world has ever seen." It did not, however, substantially damage the main ship channel, as the jetties protecting it proved adequate. The board estimated that the jetties, which had initially cost nine million dollars, had suffered one and a half million dollars worth of damage. In making repairs, the board recommended grading the inner end of the jetties at six feet above mean low tide instead

James A. Robert, Boston, Massachusetts, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 9 June 1898, HMR Papers, reel 2

¹² Account of the Death of Helen Robert, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 3; Typed Copy of Obituary of Helen Robert, Forwarded from Milwaukee by A. R. Medbury, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 3; Obituary in Newspaper Clipping, n.p., n.d., HMR Papers, reel 7; Henry Martyn Robert, [Sr.], New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19 March 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, [Sr.], Owego, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., n.p., 8 May 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 260; Carter, "The Clubwoman's Best Friend," 57; Preface, *The Scott, Foresman Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 1990/9th ed., xl.

of the previous five foot level to provide even better protection for the channel and local fortifications.¹³

In a meeting held in the Galveston chamber of commerce building on 29 October 1900, Henry Robert suggested that the city and county of Galveston build a seawall to permanently protect the island from the Gulf. He warned that the project would be expensive and would probably involve the federal government, just as the construction of the channel jetties had done. A group of local businessmen calling themselves the Deep Water Committee took up the challenge of securing this seawall. The first step was to get a new local government, which became a reality when Texas granted Galveston a new charter for a government with city and county commissioners and a mayor appointed by the governor. The charter also allowed the commissioners to appoint a panel of three engineers to recommend ways to protect the island from the sea, including the construction of a seawall. The Deep Water Committee petitioned the new government to create this panel at the city commission's first meeting on 24 September 1901. The petition was granted, calling for a commission of three experienced engineers to be chosen to recommend effective and efficient means of protecting the city and county from storms, the elevation of the city, and the construction of a seawall. The three

¹³ Quote from Report on Galveston Jetties and Ship Channel, 23 November 1900, HMR Papers, reel 6; John M. Wilson, Washington, D.C., to Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, 12 November 1900, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, New York, New York, to Charles S. Riché, Galveston, Texas, 6 October 1900, HMR Papers, reel 6; W. Watson Davis, "How Galveston Secured Protection Against the Sea," *The American Monthly*, February 1906, 200-201. For accounts of the hurricane, see Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 237-241; David G. McComb, *Galveston: A History* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1986), 121-135; Herbert Molloy Mason, Jr., *Death From the Sea: Our Greatest Natural Disaster, The Galveston Hurricane of 1900* (New York: Dial Press, 1972).

engineers finally chosen were Henry Martyn Robert, well known in Galveston for his past work in the area; Alfred A. Noble, of the Noble and Woodward engineering consulting firm in New York City; and Henry Clay Ripley, a local engineer who had served in the district with the Corps of Engineers. Noble had designed similar projects in Chicago. Ripley had designed a wagon road connecting Galveston to the mainland. Robert chaired the commission. The three men, who were paid fifteen hundred dollars each, delivered their report on 25 January 1902.¹⁴

Robert, Noble and Ripley recommended that the construction of a seawall over three miles long and reaching seventeen feet above mean low tide. The seawall was to be constructed of solid concrete, poured in layers and embracing the pilings of the foundation, which were to be protected by sheet pilings. The concrete was to be reinforced with steel rods at least every four feet. Drains were to be set in the wall every five hundred feet. The face of the seawall was to be protected by stone rip-rap, three feet thick and extending out from the wall for twenty-seven feet. The rip-rap would break the force of waves and allow water to drain back off the wall without scouring away the foundation. The top of the wall was to be paved. The city grade was to rise one foot every fifteen hundred feet from the channel side of the island to the Gulf side, designed

¹⁴ McComb, *Galveston*, 135-146; Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 241; Newspaper Clippings, HMR Papers, reel 7; Davis, "How Galveston Secured Protection Against the Sea," 201-202; D. B. Henderson, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, In Care of the Adjutant General of the United States Army, Washington, D.C., 19 October 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; Telegram, I[saac] H. Kempner, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Haworth, New Jersey, 21 November 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; Charles S. Riché, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Haworth, New Jersey, 4 November 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; Memorandum on Appointment of Engineers, Galveston, Texas, 5 December 1901, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Haworth, New Jersey, to John W. Campbell, Galveston, Texas, 26 April 1902, HMR Papers, reel 2.

so as to crest two hundred feet behind the seawall at a height one foot above that of the seawall. This would drain water coming over the wall back into the sea. The estimated cost was \$3,505,040.¹⁵

The city and county commissioners gladly accepted the proposal. Costs were divided. The county would raise one and a half million dollars and the city the remaining two million. To finance the project, the City of Galveston partially defaulted on an 1881 bond issue and then received permission from the state of Texas for a new two million dollar bond issue at 5 percent. To pay for this, the state finally agreed to release all *ad valorem* and poll taxes collected in Galveston County and 75 percent of the occupational taxes collected for the next forty years. The county also drew heavily on relief contributions sent in from around the country. Bids were accepted after a public referendum approved the project 3,119 to 22. J. M. O'Rourke and Company of Denver, Colorado received the contract for the seawall. It was the first major contract for O'Rourke and his new partner, George Steinmetz. The difficult grading contract went to Goedhart and Bates of New York, though the North American Dredging Company took over the contract in 1910 and completed the work the next year. The original portion of the seawall was completed in 1904. To supplement this project, the city and county deeded land to the United States government, which extended the seawall and grading an

¹⁵ McComb, *Galveston*, 135-146, Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 241; Newspaper Clippings, HMR Papers, reel 7, Advertisement, Specifications, Bid, Etc., For the Construction of Sea Wall at Galveston, Texas, 16 June 1902, HMR Papers, reel 6; Davis, "How Galveston Secured Protection Against the Sea," 202; Charles S. Riché, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Haworth, New Jersey, 4 November 1901, HMR Papers, reel 2; J. S. Fraqua, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, 10 September 1902, HMR Papers, reel 2; Note on Mix of Concrete, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 1.

additional 4,935 feet to cover Fort Crockett. This was completed in 1905 and cost the federal government three quarters of a million dollars.¹⁶

The first serious test of the Galveston seawall came 21 July 1909 when another hurricane hit the island. The section of the wall near Fort Crockett, built by the Corps of Engineers under Lieutenant-Colonel Charles S. Riché, performed perfectly. The rest of the defenses did not fare so well, though the storm surge of the hurricane only rose six and a half feet above mean low tide. The city experienced extensive flooding and both the embankment and foundation of the seawall were badly scoured. Though generally pleased with the performance of the seawall, the county commissioners still brought in Henry Robert to survey the damage and determine what had gone wrong.¹⁷

The trouble was ascribed to the construction process. Robert was dismayed to find that the specifications set by the engineering commission in 1902 had been largely ignored. Instead of a dense layer of rip-rap overlaying the seawall, the construction company had built a stone breakwater. This allowed waves and currents to scour away the foundation and expose the non-creosoted pilings to worms. Instead of pouring the wall as a layered monolith, the company had poured it in two distinct sections with no reinforcements connecting them at all and only half the required steel reinforcing rods.

¹⁶ McComb, *Galveston*, 135-146; Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 241-245; Newspaper Clippings, HMR Papers, reel 7; William T. Austin, *Memorial of the City of Galveston to the Democratic State Convention at Galveston, July 15th, 1902 and to the Twenty-Eighth Legislature of the State of Texas* (photocopy from the Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas); Advertisement, Specifications, Bid, Etc., For the Construction of Sea Wall at Galveston, Texas, 16 June 1902, HMR Papers, reel 6; Davis, "How Galveston Secured Protection Against the Sea," 202-205.

The concrete itself had been mixed using inferior cement. This reduced the strength of the wall against major storms. The grading of the embankment had been thoroughly botched. Instead of cresting two hundred feet from the seawall and one foot higher in elevation, it actually crested a foot lower in elevation and only forty-three feet from the wall. This caused the grading work to flood the city, not protect it. Robert told the county that they had paid too much for a job badly done and would have to repair the damage in accordance with the original plans. He also approached Noble and Ripley with the necessity of protecting themselves from lawsuits by delivering their objections to the Galveston commissioners in writing. Though Robert was not sure that the Galveston officials fully understood the gravity of the situation, the commissioners expressed their thanks when Robert helped work out methods to repair the damage at moderate cost.¹⁸

¹⁷ McComb, *Galveston*, 145-146; Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 245; Newspaper Clippings, HMR Papers, reel 7; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to the County Commissioners Court, Galveston, Texas, 17 August 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2.

¹⁸ McComb, *Galveston*, 145-146; Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 245-247; Newspaper Clippings, HMR Papers, reel 7; C. W. Trueheart, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Washington, D.C., 27 July 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Report to the County Commissioners Court, Galveston, Texas, 17 August 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Draft Report to the County Commissioners Court, Galveston, Texas, 3 September 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Memorandum of Defects in the Galveston Seawall, And the Rip-rap Curtain in Front, And the Embankment in Rear of It, Due to Deviating From the Project of the Board of Engineers of 1902: These Defects Were Found, Or Heard of From Reliable Authority, By Gen. H. M. Robert During His Visit to Galveston Aug. 7 to Sept. 8, 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Second Project, 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Alfred A. Noble, New York, New York, 16 December 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Alfred A. Noble, New York, New York, 18 December 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Alfred A. Noble, New York, New York, to Lewis Fisher, [Mayor of Galveston], Galveston, Texas, 4 October 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Alfred A. Noble, New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 17 December 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Alfred A. Noble, New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 22 December 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Alfred A. Noble, New York, New York, to County Commissioners Court, Galveston, Texas, 23 December

An even more severe hurricane battered Galveston Island in 1915. With advance notice, the island had largely been evacuated by the time the storm hit on 16 August. The hurricane buffeted the island throughout the day and into the next with tides over fourteen feet above mean low tide and with twenty-one foot waves. The schooner *Allison Doura*, driven before the storm from near Mobile, Alabama, ran up on the seawall and was beaten into splinters. Compared to the effects of the hurricane in 1900, the damage to the city was minimal. Even though it had not been built perfectly in line with the original specifications of Henry Robert and the other engineers, the seawall had proven its worth. Robert was yet again brought in to survey the damage and make additional recommendations. He suggested planting Bermuda grass to control erosion; the extension of the paved area behind the seawall by ten feet and the protection of the paving by a graded curb; the construction of a reinforced bulkhead one hundred feet behind the seawall to raise the overall level of protection to twenty-one feet above mean low tide; and the addition of more rip-rap to protect the foundation of the wall and the embankment from erosion and to further break the force of waves. Colonel Riché also supervised additional extensions and improvements to the area under the control of the Corps of Engineers. Subsequent storms have tested the effectiveness of the Galveston

1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Fred C. Pabst, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 28 September 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Alfred A. Noble, New York, New York, to Dr. C. W. Trueheart, Galveston, Texas, 14 September 1909, HMR Papers, reel 2; Lewis Fisher, George E. Mann, Fred C. Pabst, V. E. Austin, A. T. Dickey, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 16 February 1910, HMR Papers, reel 2; Fred C. Pabst, Galveston, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 16 February 1910, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Lewis Fisher, George E. Mann, Fred C. Pabst, V. E. Austin, A. T. Dickey, Galveston, Texas, 23 February 1910, HMR Papers, reel 2.

defenses designed by Henry Robert, a system that is still considered to be among the most effective storm protection to be found anywhere in the world.¹⁹

Henry Robert had also been consulted in the construction of a new causeway and bridge linking Galveston with the mainland, two miles away. This new concrete and steel causeway replaced an older wagon road and railroad trestle. Construction on a plan designed by Robert began in 1907 and was completed in 1912. The new causeway accommodated two railroad tracks and a track for an electric trolley that connected Galveston and Houston, a water main, and a roadbed for automobiles. It also included a one hundred-foot wide drawbridge to accommodate water traffic. As with the seawall, construction did not follow the actual plans; the foundations and embankments used dirt as filler. After the hurricane of 1915, Robert and a board of engineers made recommendations for repairs that would halt the erosion of the fill. Robert and a fellow commissioner drew up plans for three possible solutions. The method preferred by Robert was the construction of a concrete wall similar to the Galveston seawall. This solution was the most expensive. Next in favor and expense was a cellular wall of crossed and buttressed bulkheads. Robert conceded that the least expensive method would be sufficient. This involved piling ten-ton slabs of stone on the concrete foundation caps to a height of four feet above the water line. The majority of the

¹⁹ Henry Martyn Robert, "Curbing the Sea at Galveston: How the Seawall Stood Up Before the Recent Hurricane," *Scientific American*, 25 September 1915, 268-269; McComb, *Galveston*, 146-149; Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 245-247; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to the County Commissioners Court, Galveston, Texas, 11 October 1915, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to the County Commissioners Court, Galveston, Texas, 21 December 1915, HMR Papers, reel 2; "Wonders of Weather: Hurricane," videotape produced by Pioneer Productions for The Learning Channel, Discovery Productions, Inc., 1995.

commission agreed with Robert in recommending a concrete wall. Robert's work helped maintain the viability of Galveston, though his work in designing the ship channel to Houston helped render Galveston less competitive economically. As a consultant, Robert also helped with improvements to Frontera, Mexico, in 1911. This proved to be a source of irritation when officials in Frontera were slow to pay Robert's fees. Robert experienced a similar problem with the North American Dredging Company, responsible for finishing the grading in Galveston.²⁰

By 1916, Henry Robert turned his full attention to parliamentary law. In 1912, he had begun rewriting *Robert's Rules of Order* into *Rules of Order Revised*, a much more extensive revision than he had provided in 1893. With circulation of *Rules of Order* nearing five hundred thousand copies, Robert knew his manual was inadequate to meet a widening variety of needs, from novices in small clubs to experienced parliamentarians in national conventions. As he reworked his manual, Robert felt a need to provide a comprehensive work that would meet all these needs. Still, he felt he had to keep *Rules of Order Revised* a pocket-sized manual in the mold of its predecessor. He now began thinking of a new book containing a detailed explanation of his parliamentary system that

²⁰ Newspaper Clippings, HMR Papers, reel 7; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to County Commissioners, Galveston, Texas, 31 July 1907, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Draft of Letter to Railroad Manager, 1907, HMR Papers, reel 2; George E. Mann, Galveston County, Texas, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 26 June 1907, HMR Papers, reel 2; Notes on Meetings of Causeway Committee, 15 October 1915, and 6 December 1915, HMR Papers, reel 6; Memorandum of Meeting of Causeway Committee, 23 September 1915, HMR Papers, reel 6; Report of Meeting of Causeway Committee, 11 October 1915, As Revised 15 October 1915, HMR Papers, reel 6; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to Executive Committee, Galveston Causeway Celebration, Galveston, Texas, 11 May 1912, HMR Papers, reel 2; Notes on Frontera, Mexico, HMR Papers, reel 2; McComb, *Galveston*, 144-145, 149; Alperin, *Custodians of the Coast*, 111-113; Will of Henry Martyn Robert, Proved 11 June 1923 (Photocopy by Surrogate's Court, County of Tioga, Owego, New York).

would be useful to serious parliamentarians. It would be enlivened with illustrations drawn from his voluminous correspondence. Believing competency in basic parliamentary procedure to be a skill needed by all educated Americans, Robert wanted the book to provide a training system of lessons and drills for novices, as well. Again, Robert's correspondence would provide the background for the lessons and drills.²¹

Robert put aside *Rules of Order Revised* for eight months in 1913 to begin a manuscript of the larger book. He then returned to the new manual, which Scott, Foresman and Company published in 1915. The new guide revised and expanded the old rules; however, 75 percent of the book was new material. The book also highlighted a new system of lessons for groups and individuals determined to master the new manual in a systematic fashion. This helped Robert balance the effectiveness of the manual for both large and complex assemblies and for less formal situations.²²

In 1916, Robert gave his full attention to writing a manuscript of *Parliamentary Law*. He worked on it with few interruptions to July 1920, producing a manuscript of 750 typed pages, without the index. By now Robert was physically limited by hearing loss and cataracts. He received valuable assistance in his work from Isabel Robert and Mildred Anderson, a friend in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Anderson had developed a system of four charts used to teach Robert's parliamentary system and had persuaded the

²¹ Henry Martyn Robert, Memoranda Concerning General Robert's Works on Parliamentary Law, 1921, HMR Papers, reel 3; Robert, Preface to *Parliamentary Practice*, ix-x; Robert, Preface to *Parliamentary Law*, v-vi.

²² Henry Martyn Robert, Memoranda Concerning General Robert's Works on Parliamentary Law, 1921, HMR Papers, reel 3; Preface, *The Scott, Foresman Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 1990/9th ed., xl.; Henry Martyn Robert, *Robert's Rules*

Roberts to have them published. In 1917, Henry Robert worked to secure the benefits of his work for his family by creating a trust for *Rules of Order Revised*. Isabel and Henry, Jr., were named as trustees. Since the parliamentary law charts had been the work of Mildred Anderson, he yielded the rights to her at the same time. In the preparation of *Parliamentary Law*, Anderson pored over Robert's correspondence to select the questions and answers used in the book and prepared the index. This made her contribution quite significant, as Henry Robert recognized.²³

Henry Robert finally realized that the comprehensive tome he had originally planned would not be marketable. The cost, he felt, would be prohibitive if he tried to include disparate sections which would respectively appeal only to novices or experts. He had wanted for some time to publish his own parliamentary primer. He decided to satisfy that desire now by excising the last fifty-five pages of his manuscript and developing the primer separately as *Parliamentary Practice*. In the past, he had been forced to refer inquiries for such a primer to others, including his brother Joe. Now he would provide a training manual of his own. The typed manuscript of *Parliamentary Practice* finally

of Order Revised For Deliberative Assemblies (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1915).

²³ Henry Martyn Robert, Memoranda Concerning General Robert's Works on Parliamentary Law, 1921, HMR Papers, reel 3; Will of Henry Martyn Robert, Isabel H. Robert, Owego, New York, to Mildred Anderson, n.p., 16 March 1915, HMR Papers, reel 2; Isabel H. Robert, Owego, New York, to Mildred Anderson, n.p., 23 March 1915, HMR Papers, reel 2; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, Open Letter of Endorsement for Mrs. William [Mildred] Anderson, 10 June 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Isabel H. Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Frank A. [Narcissa] Vanderlip, New York, New York, 30 November 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 52; Plaisted, "General Henry M. Robert, Parliamentarian," 161; Martyn Robert, Preface to *Parliamentary Law*, v-vi; Flyer for *Parliamentary Law Charts and Rules of Order Revised* Available From Mildred Anderson, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 7; Revised Price List for *Parliamentary Law Charts and Rules of Order Revised* Available From Mildred Anderson, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 7.

reached 140 pages and included twenty lessons and seven drills. This allowed Robert to complete *Parliamentary Law* as a more technically complex book designed to appeal to teachers and professional parliamentarians.²⁴

To complete his two new books, Henry Robert involved his new daughter-in-law, Sarah Corbin Robert. Henry and Isabel had known Sarah since about the time of their marriage, when they shared a duplex with the Corbin family. The teen-aged Sarah grew very close to the Roberts, a fact that drew a lot of attention when she attended Syracuse University. After graduation, she taught history in a high school in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Only in 1918 did she finally get to know Henry Martyn Robert, Jr., who was teaching mathematics at Annapolis and parliamentary law at Columbia University during each summer. The two married in 1919. Sarah's father-in-law asked her to review *Parliamentary Law* and *Parliamentary Practice* and give her professional opinion of them. This aroused Sarah's interest in parliamentary law and she soon began to study the subject with her husband. She had been drawn firmly into the Robert family tradition.²⁵

With his manuscripts finished, Robert had to secure a publisher. He had offered *Parliamentary Law* to Scott, Foresman and Company, seeking a 20 percent royalty. Since he made a dollar from the sale of each copy of *Rules of Order Revised*, Robert estimated that this would produce two dollars from the new book. Scott, Foresman and

²⁴ Henry Martyn Robert, Memoranda Concerning General Robert's Works on Parliamentary Law, 1921, HMR Papers, reel 3; Plaisted, "General Henry M. Robert: Parliamentarian," 161; Robert, Preface to *Parliamentary Law*, v-vi.

²⁵ Carter, "The Clubwoman's Best Friend," 57; Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 November 1941, HMR SCL 1651; Preface, *The Scott, Foresman Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 1990/9th ed., xl-xli.

Company, however, balked at the 20 percent royalty and stalled on giving a final answer. The end of World War I had made it necessary for the company to revise its textbooks and had boosted sales of its books, including *Rules of Order Revised*. They were too preoccupied with the rush to make an expeditious decision on Robert's new books. He finally concluded that he needed to look elsewhere. Though the company had done a good job marketing *Rules of Order* and *Rules of Order Revised*, Robert wanted a publisher experienced in something besides textbooks to deal with his new works. D. Appleton, Century, Crofts, Incorporated (The Century Company) published *Parliamentary Practice* in 1921 and *Parliamentary Law* in January 1923. Appleton had rejected Robert's first parliamentary work; ironically, the company's successor now published his last. Royalties from the primer went to Isabel Robert, with a request that they be used to support charities, while royalties from the larger book were to be donated by the publisher to support Baptist medical missions.²⁶

These three books, *Rules of Order Revised*, *Parliamentary Practice* and *Parliamentary Law*, brought Robert's parliamentary career to a conclusion in as fitting a fashion as the Galveston seawall and causeway and the Houston ship channel had closed his engineering career. At their publication, he had only a few months left to live. In January 1923, Henry and Isabel Robert had planned a trip to Hawaii and the Pacific

²⁶ Henry Martyn Robert, Memoranda Concerning General Robert's Works on Parliamentary Law, 1921, HMR Papers, reel 3; Plaisted, "General Henry M. Robert: Parliamentarian," 161; E. H. Scott, Chicago, Illinois, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 23 August 1921, HMR Papers, reel 3; Dana H. Ferrin, New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 30 January 1923, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to F. S. Crofts, Harper and Brothers, New York, New York, 7 March 1921, HMR Papers, reel 3; Robert, *Parliamentary Practice*; Robert, *Parliamentary Law*.

Coast, but they never made the trip. James Robert died in February and the travel plans were changed to a trip to Miami Beach, Florida. By May, Henry Robert grew ill. He died in a sanitarium in Hornell, New York, on 11 May 1923, nine days after his eighty-sixth birthday. He was the last surviving member of his West Point class. A memorial service was held at the Baptist church in Owego; wearing the uniform of a brigadier general, Robert was buried at the Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.²⁷

As trustees of Robert's legacy, his widow, son, and daughter-in-law carried on his work. That responsibility has become a family legacy. Henry Martyn Robert III actively participates in the ongoing revision of *Rules of Order*, which is still used by over twenty-two thousand known organizations and has reached over four and a half million copies in print. He is a respected parliamentary authority in his own right. The Robert's Rules Association, made up of descendants of Henry Martyn Robert, generally supervises promotion of his parliamentary works and system. The association selects a three-member executive council to handle day-to-day operations, with normal business operations currently handled by John Robert Redgrave. The association supports a website dedicated to *Robert's Rules of Order* and public assistance in matters of

²⁷ Obituary of Henry Martyn Robert, *The New York Times*, 12 May 1923; Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 260; Isabel H. Robert, Owego, New York, to Mrs. Frank A. [Narcissa] Vanderlip, New York, New York, 30 November 1922, HMR Papers, reel 3; Eugene Berry, New York, New York, to Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, 3 February 1923, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Miami, Florida, to Ellis Burgess, Crafton, Pennsylvania, 10 March 1923, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Miami, Florida, to Ellis Burgess, Crafton, Pennsylvania, 15 March 1923, HMR Papers, reel 3; Henry Martyn Robert, Miami, Florida, to Mrs. Cole, n.p., 14 March 1923, HMR Papers, reel 3. Smedley, *The Great Peacemaker*, 68; Mrs. Frank H. (Alice Frye) Briggs, [Recording Secretary General, National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution], n.p., to Isabel H. Robert, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 18 June 1923, HMR Papers, reel 3; *1990 Register of Graduates and Former Cadets*, 280. Joe

parliamentary practice. The latest edition of the manual bears little resemblance to Robert's original pocket-sized version. Though reflecting the same original philosophy of Robert's work, its length and complexity rivals that of the volumes it replaced in popular usage in 1876. This has, oddly enough, opened a market for the older and simpler editions, which no longer enjoy copyright protection.²⁸

In the end, Henry Robert and his heirs have done their work well enough to be largely taken for granted. Americans are not as concerned with the exact procedure of public meetings, and may assume that the rules established by Robert are operating even if they cannot name the man who actually wrote those rules. Nevertheless, no longer does the average citizen who presides over a raucous public meeting have to write his or her own rules on an index card. Having survived his New Bedford meeting, Henry Martyn Robert guaranteed it.

Robert, the last surviving child of Joseph Thomas and Adeline Lawton Robert, died in 1925 at the age of ninety. Miller, *Our Family Circle*, 260.

²⁸ Robert's will does not specifically discuss the control of copyrights and royalties. The rights, royalties and trusteeship of all his parliamentary works seem to have been assigned adequately in separate instruments. It is under this system that control of Robert's works passes to the Robert's Rules Association. The will names Isabel H. Robert and Henry Martyn Robert, Jr. as executors; instructs them to distribute equally the proceeds of his life insurance policies among his children; assigns claims against the North American Dredging Company and the Mexican government to Henry, Jr.; and leaves the remainder of his settled estate in the name of Isabel Robert. Will of Henry Martyn Robert; Plaisted, "General Henry M. Robert: Parliamentarian," 161; Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to [Illegible], n.p., 17 September 1922, HMR Papers, reel 6; Jacob E. Smart and Thomas O. Lawton, Jr., Application for Admission of Henry Martyn Robert to the South Carolina Hall of Fame, 1994, photocopy; Preface and Jacket Information, *The Scott, Foresman Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 1990/9th ed., xl-xliv, and jacket; Official Robert's Rules of Order Website, Robert's Rules Association, <http://www.robertsrules.com>. For examples of reprints, see the Spire Books 1967 reprint of the 1893 edition, cited above and Darwin Patnode, *Robert's Rules of Order: The Modern Edition* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1989).

CONCLUSION

Henry Martyn Robert's contributions to engineering and parliamentary law have secured for him a continuing influence on American society. His seawall still guards Galveston, Texas, and his ship channel still connects Houston to the Gulf of Mexico. Over twenty-two thousand organizations, large and small, rely on some version of Robert's manuals to guide business and debate. The institutionalization of Robert's parliamentary system, however, obscures the man who provided it.

The most basic aspects of Henry Robert's character were a dogged sense of duty and discipline, coupled to a strong aversion to disorder. He abhorred any situation which he could not control. This sense of duty and love of order shaped Robert's outlook on life. Duty and discipline allowed individuals to control chaos and function effectively in all circumstances, and society was best guided by established rules which individuals followed to their benefit. Only when these rules were correctly understood and applied could human life, corporate and individual, function efficiently, effectively and properly. Robert's behavior exhibited a belief that the failure of a person to do his or her known duty was one of the greatest of sins. He refused to allow himself to fail in anything and drove himself beyond the limits of his physical ability to accomplish every task set before him—be it cutting a military road, serving the Union, reforming Washington, D.C., or

attending to voluminous administrative details. On more than one occasion, Robert stubbornly worked himself to absolute exhaustion and bad health. He once told a Baptist congregation, "There is no such word as 'fail' in the vocabulary of the truly consecrated child of God." There was no such word as "fail" in the vocabulary of Henry Martyn Robert.¹

Robert's sense of duty and order could override other attachments. This surfaced in his choice to remain in the United States Army during the Civil War despite his mother's objections. Henry's parents instilled in their son their own sense of duty to God, to family, and to country. Their love of family and of the South did not preclude them from taking a moral stance against slavery. Loyalty to God came first. Their moral convictions led them to leave the home state they loved and to educate their children in an environment free from the taint of slavery. This stance guided their reactions to the Civil War and Reconstruction. Henry, however, made his choice to support the Union from a different perspective. Though imbued with his parents' strong religious morality, he reported his decision to support the North in other terms.

His family's travels, his West Point education, and his service on the frontier had opened up for Henry Robert an awareness of a growing nation which transcended provincialism. The customs and interests of any one state or region should not take precedent over the interests of the nation as a whole. Though Robert loved his family and his native state, and agreed with the principle of secession, he found he could not

¹ Quote from Henry Martyn Robert, Dedication Sermon at Grace Baptist Church, Washington, D.C., 7 June 1891, HMR Papers, reel 6.

support it. Secession created social disorder. In the end, it would harm both the nation and the state. The best interest of the nation was also the best interest of the state or region. Robert obeyed his duty.²

Robert's love of duty and order, and his sense of nationalism led him to remain in Union blue. That sense of order and an appreciation of the United States as an integrating nation later led him to write *Rules of Order*. Robert reacted strongly to the lack of control he felt in New Bedford, Massachusetts, in 1863. Not only did he want to prevent the recurrence of such an event in his own life, he finally sought to prevent it from happening to others. His experience with reform groups in cosmopolitan San Francisco, California, reinforced his sentiments. The time had come for every citizen to become conversant in a uniform system of parliamentary law. Regional and localized applications had become outdated and obstructive to the democratic process. As Americans became more mobile and the United States more integrated, citizens needed a simple, flexible, and universal system to guide parliamentary debate. This could guarantee democratic expression within the confines of orderly rules. Robert felt that it was "best for a society to attend to its own business and not waste its time trying to find out what is parliamentary law." Only uniform rules could accomplish this and prevent societies from being subjected to the twin tyrannies of autocratic chairmen and mob rule. Rules prevented a society from becoming "the slave of its own passion." Only rules, dutifully applied, could prevent the embarrassment and frustration that Robert had

² Biographical Sketch, HMR Papers, reel 7; Jadwin, "Henry Martyn Robert," 1-2.

experienced in New Bedford and San Francisco, while meeting the needs of a growing nation.³

Robert's sense of duty and order served him well within the command structure of the army. It could cause friction with the less structured civilian world. Though some officers apparently found Robert to be too jocular, his intelligence, diligence, honor, and efficiency earned him the respect of his peers. This was best exemplified by their efforts to secure his retirement from the army as a brigadier general and chief of engineers. Though Robert could be a charming conversationalist, his background left him with a rather proper demeanor. Isabel Robert seems to have found this occasionally amusing. His interest in math and logic puzzles would have been no easier to share in casual conversation than his fascination with parliamentary law. Robert could apparently be tedious and pedantic.⁴

Robert's papers reveal a man who was deeply and dogmatically religious. He exhibited a law and order concept of morality based on biblical principles and he could be stubbornly inflexible in the application of these principles. As demonstrated in Robert's term as engineer commissioner for Washington, D.C., these principles could not

³ First quote from Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; second quote from *The Need for Rules of Order in Baptist Churches*, n.d., HMR Papers, reel 6. See also *Lecture on Parliamentary Law*, HMR Papers, reel 6; *Unpublished Preface* (1 May 1874), HMR Papers, reel 6.

⁴ [Illegible], San Francisco, California, to Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., 6 February 1890, HMR Papers, reel 2; Sarah Corbin Robert, Annapolis, Maryland, to Dudley Jones, Clinton, South Carolina, 25 November 1941, HMR SCL 1651; E. J. Mehren, "Henry Martyn Robert: Soldier, Parliamentarian, Author and Engineer: An Appreciation of the Author of 'Robert's Rules of Order' and Chief of Engineers, U. S. Army, Retired," *Engineering News-Record*, 22 April 1920 (typescript copy in HMR SCL 1651); Isabel H. Robert, Owego, New York, to Mildred Anderson, n.p., 23 March 1915, HMR Papers, reel 2; *Logic and Math Puzzles and Charades Clues*, HMR Papers, reel 1.

be translated automatically into the successful reform of social institutions. To Robert, the District of Columbia had strict codes to control activities which he regarded as immoral. He felt that it was his duty to enforce those codes. Strict adherence to the letter of God's higher moral code, however, could be empowered only through the religious conversion of the individual. Robert acknowledged this, but it hardly prevented him from expecting others to recognize the legitimacy of his moral code or from applying it diligently in all circumstances. This was his duty to God. Robert's behavior could be more emblematic of Old Testament purity codes than of New Testament grace. Less strict persons, like Lemon G. Hine and Brothers Murphy and Katz, could find Robert's legalism grating.

There are frustrating limitations on what may be learned about Robert from his papers. The materials readily illuminate our understanding of his early military service, his decision to support the North during the Civil War, and his purpose in promoting parliamentary law. There are occasional glimpses of his interaction with his family. Robert's sermons, speeches, and letters bring to life his religious commitment and partially explain his views on social reform. Many areas remain vague. Robert's life spanned an era of tremendous change. A child of the Old South, he experienced the opening and closing of the northwestern frontier, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the rise of Big Business and the Trusts, Populism, Progressivism, and the emergence of the United States as a world power in the Spanish-American War and World War I. Little of these events are directly reflected in Robert's papers. These events shaped the context of his life, yet his reactions to them and reflections on them are largely absent from the

documentary evidence. Robert's military career insulated him within a world of duty and honor separate from civilian trends and activities. His reform efforts and correspondence in parliamentary law seem not to have overcome that isolation. Whatever Robert felt about the world outside the army, the church, and parliamentary law went unrecorded.

This is particularly troublesome with respect to Progressivism. It is too simplistic to examine Robert's attitudes and actions and quickly label him a Progressive. This obscures Robert's own sentiments within this broader framework. Robert did, indeed, feel that the success of the American democratic process rested squarely on the ability of its citizens to participate fully in deliberative assemblies. He felt that it was the duty of every man and woman to so participate and he consciously reformed parliamentary law to help make this a reality. For special interest groups to gain an effective voice in American society, they needed the organizational efficiency to "attend to [their] business." Robert gave them that ability.⁵

This contribution alone made Robert's work foundational for the multi-faceted reform movement called Progressivism. Moreover, his own expressed attitudes concerning democracy, professionalism, institutionalism, order, efficiency, and the possibility of social reform place Robert firmly within the Progressive mind-set. All of these statements, however, must be tempered by Robert's own words. Robert's conception of himself as a reformer was framed entirely within the realms of

⁵ Quote from Henry Martyn Robert, Owego, New York, to R. I. Fulton, Delaware, Ohio, 1 March 1916, HMR SCL 9547; Henry Martyn Robert, n.p., to Professor Judson, Chicago University, Chicago, Illinois, 25 January 1899, HMR Papers, reel 5; Lecture on Parliamentary Law, HMR Papers, reel 6; Unpublished Preface (1 May 1874), HMR Papers, reel 6; Doyle, "Rules of Order," 6-12, 17-18.

parliamentary law and Christian evangelicalism. For Robert, even temperance, a cause for which he exhibited great sympathy, could truly succeed only within an evangelistic framework. Robert illustrated this belief by recounting his efforts on the frontier to help Corporal Mark Supplee, who wanted to give up alcohol but lacked the inner strength to do so. For Robert, this failure came entirely from a lack of religious commitment.⁶

The only arresting use of the word “progressive” in Robert’s papers comes from an 1895 report in which he argued that a church “in its normal condition is active, aggressive, progressive. It should not, it cannot be otherwise. A cessation of activities in any church means stagnation; and stagnation means spiritual decay and death.” If Robert ever conceived of himself as a Progressive, it was within such a context. A Christian—or a citizen—must actively promote progress or accept decay and decline. It was this basic belief, not an active commitment to a broader social reform movement, which spurred Robert to take action in reform. He did not refer to himself as a Progressive in his papers. He made no surviving comment on the coalescing reform movement 1900-1920. He was silent. Nevertheless, Henry Robert was a Progressive reformer, even if he would have been uncomfortable with that label.⁷

That commitment to the democratic voice and moral reform frames Henry Robert’s legacy beyond his works on parliamentary law and his accomplishments in engineering. Henry Robert was too active and involved to have understood civic apathy. To him,

⁶ Henry Martyn Robert, *Sermon on Sunday Schools and Moral Reform*, Delivered in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, 14 December 1876, HMR Papers, reel 6.

⁷ Henry Martyn Robert, *Draft of Annual Report of Advisory Committee*, West Baptist Church, Oswego, New York, 5 May 1895, HMR Papers, reel 3.

participation in a democratic society or a religious body entailed a conscious obligation to promote the goals and welfare of that body. Citizens had a duty to correct the ills that affected their society. Inaction meant decay. Robert reminds us that social problems will not simply go away. They cannot be solved until we take orderly and dutiful action. This responsibility is inherent in our democratic heritage. To not honor our duty to that heritage is to betray it. *Robert's Rules of Order* is still available to help us organize for effective action. The choice to do so is our own.

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